Mirroring the Past

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/2105112.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	King Arthur (2004), Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Galahad/Tristan
Characters:	Tristan, Galahad, Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham, Gawain, Alana Bloom, Arthur Castus, Bors (King Arthur), Lancelot (King Arthur), Jack Crawford, Freddie Lounds
Additional Tags:	Reincarnation, Crossover, Angst, Hurt/Comfort, Romance
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2014-08-09 Updated: 2017-05-03 Words: 41,005 Chapters: 30/?

Mirroring the Past

by Aerilon452

Summary

Tristan made a vow to Galahad; they would always find each other. Hannibal and Will are putting it to the test when memories surface and blood was shed.

The Vow

HADRIAN'S WALL:
942 AD

They were Sarmatian's. They were knights. They had been brought to the far outpost of Britain to fulfill a bargain struck by their ancestors; a bargain selling them to Rome. Tristan was such, a Sarmatian clan prince, taken by the Roman's to live out his life as a soldier. But he would not be there alone. Galahad had been drafted right alongside him. Months flew by, turning into years. At the five year mark Lancelot, Gawain, Dagonet, and Bors convinced Tristan and Galahad to celebrate. Tristan wanted to refuse, he wanted to be alone with Galahad, but his intended had convinced him to join in. He stayed close, glaring at others who looked the wrong way at his Galahad. It was easy to glance at the young man, his smooth skin, the long curls of hair, and confuse him for a woman, but upon a second look another man would realize his mistake. Tristan never made such a mistake. Galahad was his and he belonged to Galahad.

Galahad laughed with his brothers of the sword while keeping close to Tristan. When their bodies aligned, he would take Tristan's hand for a second feeling the strength they shared. Smiling, Galahad lengthened his stride to catch up with the others when rough hands grabbed him, pulling him in against armor reeking of ale and sweat. "Get off!" Galahad shouted, pushing, fighting to free himself. A second pair of hands he recognized pulled him back. He had a second to realize that Tristan was punching the Roman officer. "Tristan!" Galahad shouted. "Stop! He's nothing but a Roman." Trying in vain, he gripped the worn leather of Tristan's shirt, trying to pull him back. For those few terrifying moments Tristan would not stop. Punch after punch was landed against the Roman's face. Galahad tried not to be happy that his lover would fight so fiercely for him. "Tristan, stop!" This time when he tugged at Tristan, he stopped.

Tristan allowed himself to be pulled back, Galahad's arms wrapping around his chest. To the Roman he snarled, "Lay hands upon him again, and it will be your head." Wrenching free from Galahad's hold, Tristan took his intended's hand to leave, taking them back to the barracks. The others knew the customs of his tribe and of Galahad's, but the Roman's looked on in shock. If Galahad and Tristan weren't alone, then Tristan would do something he would regret, something Galahad would have to excuse. He could do that to the one who held his heart.

Galahad went willingly with Tristan, knowing they were going back to the barracks where they shared a room, a bed, and many nights where they dreamed of freedom yet to be earned. Before they even made it to their door, Galahad stopped, pushing Tristan up against the wall. "Don't kill that Roman." He knew well the wrath of his lover. "He didn't hurt me." Galahad said knowing that that would be the one thing to stop Tristan from exacting revenge.

Tristan heaved in and out, his breathing growing harsher by the second. “That… thing… If he….” He couldn’t get the words out he was so angry. “I would fight the world to keep you from harm,” Tristan mumbled.

Galahad stepped in close, his hands coming to Tristan’s face, “The world is the Roman Empire.” He said sadly.

“I would kill them all.” Tristan replied, his tone tinged with anger. Closing the distance, he rested his head to Galahad’s breathing him in. “You alone matter to me.”

Galahad smiled at those words. “As you alone matter to me.” He replied gently, waiting for Tristan to calm down, waiting until it was safe for them.

Tristan wrapped his arms around his young Galahad as he made this vow, “No matter what life I live, no matter the distance between us, I will always find you.”

The wound

Chapter Summary

Hannibal finds Will on his front porch bloody and nearly unconscious

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND:
PRESENT

Hannibal had been having a pleasant evening had his home when all of a sudden he felt a tug to go to the front doors. He had a moment where he could ignore it, where he could retire to his room for the night, but shaking his head, Hannibal gave in going to the front door. When he opened it, he saw something he'd least expect to see. Will. The object of his fascination was crumpled on the porch not moving. No matter where they stood now, concerned motivated Hannibal's actions. Going to Will, he rolled him over until he was on his back. Hannibal saw his right side painted crimson. It was a familiar sight, but not from this life. "Will…"

"Tristan…" Will's teeth chattered. He was cold and tired and in pain. All he could think of was coming here, coming to Hannibal. Or was it Tristan he sought? He wasn't sure. He knew he'd been injured. Will wanted to see Hannibal. He didn't want to be in a hospital. "Tristan…" He tried again, but the name he knew he should be saying wouldn't tumble from his lips. "Help… me…" Blackness was creeping in, he saw spots. He could barely breathe deep enough. Will barely had enough strength to keep pressure to his wound.

Hannibal looked around. No one was out on the streets tonight. He stood over Will, fisted his hands on the front of Will's shirt, Hannibal tugged Will up and over his shoulder to carry him inside. His paramour had gotten lighter. Will wasn't eating enough. "Oh, Will, what have you done?" Carefully, Hannibal moved into the sitting room, taking Will to the fireplace where he could warm him up. Gently, he let Will slid down his body, until Hannibal was certain his young man was on his feet before lowering him down to the stone floor.

Will felt like he was falling, just slipping away from this life, and heading for the next one. Repeating over and over in his mind was Tristan's vow, 'I will always find you.' He needed to believe that now more than ever. Before, in the life that was scarcely more than a dream, their' time had been taken from them. "Don't… leave…" His words slurred together as his eyes fought to stay open.

Hannibal had a moment to deny the name Will had spoken to him, to put the lid back on the box of slowly awakening memories, but he couldn't do it. Leaning over his paramour, he whispered, "I'm here Galahad. I'm not leaving." While Will was unconscious, Hannibal

unbuttoned the blood soaked flannel shirt to reveal a deep gash. Angling down, the wound followed one of Will's ribs. Hannibal would need to suture the wound, dress it, and watch Will through the night to make sure an infection doesn't set in. Placing his lips to Will's forehead, Hannibal promised, "I'll be right back." A wet cough was all that greet him in response. Reluctantly, he pulled away to gather what he needed.

Refusal

HADRIAN'S WALL:
942 AD

Tristan road as fast as he was able, leading not only his horse, but Galahad's as well. They had been tasked by Arthur to scout along the wall where Woad activity had been reported. Galahad, being his usual surly self where the blue devils were concerned, grumbled about their mission, but because it was Arthur, they complied. No more than two days into their scouting mission they were set upon by the blue devils. Galahad had taken and arrow for Tristan and managed to keep on fighting until the last Woad fell to his sword.

Coming upon the wall Tristan called out, "OPEN THE GATE!" His tone sounded panicked to him, but to the Roman's on the wall it was a not to hurry. The massive door creaked open with tremendous effort allowing Tristan to race through. He was in the main square where Jols and Gawain greeted him. "There's no time. Galahad's been hurt."

Tristan was unaccustomed to this, to his hands shaking with the need to be useful, but he knew that he wouldn't be. All he could do was stand stoically trying not to give away his true feelings. When the medics had Galahad on the stretcher, Tristan followed, fighting to keep from being under foot. He had to remain out of the way if the healers were to have any hope. It pained him not to be right there with Galahad, telling him it would be alright. Tristan made a move to enter the room when a hand gripped his arm. Looking sharply to his left, he saw Gawain. Where he would have punched any other person, he just jerked his arm from Gawain's grip.

"Galahad's strong." Gawain said knowing the true relationship between the two men. "He will beat this, but you have to report to Arthur." For months he had been running interference between Authur, Tristan, and Galahad. No one could know that the two nights were locked in loving arms.

"No." Tristan shook his head slowly. "I will not leave until his eyes open."

"Then take my advice," Gawain counseled. "Be careful with who sees your affections towards Galahad. There has been talk about the two of you."

"Roman talk," Tristan scoffed, rolling his eyes in disgust. "They have already brought us to this island; I will not allow them to dictate how I am to act with Galahad." Drawing in deep and controlled breaths, he focused on the Roman healers flitting back and forth tending to the man that held his heart.

"Still, they hold the power in the world. If we ever want to see home again…" Gawain stopped talking. He sighed and walked away. There was no getting through to Tristan, not where Galahad was concerned.

“My life will end here,” Tristan said. “I know that, but so long as I can protect Galahad, my life will have meaning. He has a better chance of going home than I do.” The truth was out there now. So long as one of them lived, their memory would be preserved. Tristan twisted the copper ring on his right ring finger that Galahad had given him two years ago. “I couldn’t live if I knew I was the reason for his death.”

Gawain had to change the subject, “This is the most you’ve ever spoken.” He chuckled when Tristan glared at him. It was worth it to have the see his Sarmatian comrade look away from Galahad for a moment.

Calming

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND:
PRESENT

Hannibal had tended to Will's wound, dressed it, and made his young friend as comfortable on the floor as he could. He was no young man, but Hannibal stretched out next to Will feeling the heat of the fire licking across his body. Will hadn't wanted him to leave, so he wouldn't. Hannibal was going to stay right where he was until he was sure Will wasn't riddled with an infection. Blood coated Hannibal's hand shoving the box of memories open wider. He could see himself, yet not himself, wiping and cleaning blood off of his hands. Worry was coloring his face then as it did now. Even as Hannibal tended Will's wound, Will kept calling out for Tristan. Hannibal told him that he was there, that everything would be alright. It would calm Will, if only for a moment.

Will was floating on the air of unconsciousness, being surrounded by warmth. He knew he was at Hannibal's house, but beyond that he didn't know what was really happening. All he could feel was the pain in his side, the red hot angry ache of his wound that told him it had been cleaned, sutured, and bandaged. Will tried to open his eyes, but his body would no obey. He wanted to see the face of the man he cared about, the man his soul knew better than anyone. Fighting the fatigue, Will forced his eyes open, but in his fevered state, it was not Hannibal he saw, but of his love returned. "Tristan…."

Hannibal placed his left hand over Will's heart and whispered, "I'm right here." He moved closer to Will's side so he could rest his head on the same pillow. "I'm not going anywhere." Hannibal could recall in vivid detail the last time Galahad had lay dying from a wound to his side. Back then he had been Tristan, and nearly a crazed animal wanting revenge. He pulled the fur blanket up over his love careful not to inflict more pain upon him. "I swear to find whoever did this to you." Tentatively, Hannibal kissed Will's sweat slickened cheek.

"Where… are…we?" Will slurred trying to turn his head in Hannibal's direction.

"We're in front of the fire, on a pallet of furs, and silk pillows." Hannibal answered closing his eyes feeling the heat not only from the fire, but from Will as well. His fever had spiked higher. Hannibal would have to give him some fluids soon, as well as some antibiotics.

"Is this real?" Will fought to turn his head, his cheek finally touching Hannibal's brow. He coughed, feeling a weight pressing upon his chest denying him the chance to breathe deeply. All he wanted was to remain awake, to continue to listen to Hannibal and remember Tristan.

"Yes," Hannibal answered quickly. "I told you I would always find you. You alone matter to me." Will's breathing finally evened out, signaling he'd slipped back into his fevered sleep. Leaving his paramour, Hannibal went in search of some of the medical supplies he kept in the house; his main concern was an IV bag and a few vials of antibiotics.

Waiting

HADRIAN'S WALL:
942 AD

Tristan sat, or he paced, or he sat again, but not for long. Galahad remained unconscious. The night had slipped by at a crawl. There had been many times where he and Galahad had been injured, but not like this. Most of the wounds had been in the heat of battle, or in training. Returning to Galahad's side, Tristan took his hand feeling his lover's cold fingers. Leaning over him, he whispered, "You are strong. You'll survive this." Behind him the door opened. Tristan didn't have to turn to know who it was. Arthur Castus. The Sarmatian would not turn to his commander. He didn't dare take his eyes from Galahad.

Arthur took one step into the room taking in the sight before him. Tristan, normally reserved and quiet, was displaying his deep affection for Galahad. "How is he?" Arthur asked, he too was concerned for Galahad's life.

"He clings to life even as this fever is set upon him." Tristan tried desperately to keep his voice calm, to keep the fear from clouding his words. "The medics left some time ago." He couldn't exactly say when that was. Tristan's only concern was Galahad. Forcing himself, he turned to Arthur, "I have no idea how the Woad's over powered us." He said, "I never sensed them."

"Tristan, this is their country." Arthur said, placing his hand on his knight's shoulder. "They know the northern territory better than we do." He took a seat in the chair close to the bed. "I should never have sent the two of you out alone."

"You had no one else to send." Tristan looked to Arthur. "Galahad and I have spent much more time beyond the wall for us not to be chosen for the scouting mission." He took a breath, slowly letting go of Galahad's hand. They had been sent to complete a mission. "What were able to find, the Woad's have moved closer to the wall."

Arthur nodded, "Merlin is increasing his daring." He commented, hatred welling up inside him for the dark magician.

"Why can't Rome be done with this cursed island?" Tristan spat turning his gaze back to Galahad. Who would die next? Bors? Dagonet? Gawain? Arthur himself? "I should have been paying better attention." The guilt was eating him, making his surge with anger. If he hadn't been laughing with Galahad he would have sensed they were being followed.

"Don't do that to yourself." Arthur chided. "This was an accident and we'll all be wounded many more times after this." He could see the depth of pain in Tristan's eyes. The knight hardly ever spoke, and yet when he did, it was always to Galahad. Arthur was never one to pay attention to idle gossip but even he was beginning to see something between the two men.

“Arthur, I…” Tristan started to say but the door opening diverted his attention.

Gawain walked in just in time to stop Tristan from saying anything, “Vanora sent me over with this. She made a broth for Galahad, to help with his fever.” Sending Tristan a silent warning to keep his relationship to Galahad quiet, Gawain handed him the bowl. “We’ll leave you two alone.” With that said, Gawain and Arthur left.

Discovery

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND:
PRESENT

Hannibal woke on the floor where he'd fallen asleep next to Will. He could tell that he had only dozed off for half an hour. Waking himself up with sheer force of will, he checked the IV and then felt Will's forehead. From touch alone he could feel that his fever had dropped by a few degrees but it hadn't broken. Pulling back the blanket, Hannibal checked the bandage seeing blood seeping through. It was best to change the gauze while Will was asleep. Hannibal carefully pulled the silk tape up by the corner; inch by inch the wound was revealed. It was the normal amount of red indicating healing, and no infection. "Small miracles," Hannibal muttered setting to work. Clean bandages were applied as well as topical antibiotic ointment. Replacing the blanket over Will, Hannibal kissed his brow and then whispered, "I'll be right back."

Alana watched where she was walking, striding up the walkway to Hannibal's front door. There was dried blood on the concrete and a pool of it by the front door. Stepping over it, she rang the doorbell out of concern. When the door opened, Hannibal behind it, Alana was shocked by the sight of blood on his otherwise pristine shirt. "Oh, my god," She said in shock, automatically walking in, going to him. "Are you hurt?"

Hannibal hadn't thought Alana would appear at his house so early in the morning. Her concern was touching, "It's not my blood." Stepping back from her, he motioned her from the door so that he may shut it. "It belongs to Will." He said calmly, even though he was anything but inside. Knowing Alana still held some capacity of caring for Will, he said no more. Rather he led her into the sitting room where Will was still unconscious in front of the fireplace. Hannibal smiled at the small return of color to his paramour's cheeks.

"Hannibal, he should be in the hospital." Alana said going to Will, crouching down next to him, and feeling his forehead.

"I tried, but he refused before passing out." Hannibal lied easily. There was no way he would allow Will near anyone, not until they could ascertain just how much of their past had returned to them.

"I thought you were done trying to help Will?" Alana asked gently, turning to him, she looked at his wrists where the wounds Will had caused stood out.

"I'm not about to forsake Will for a second time." Hannibal was careful about his tone. "If he doesn't wish to be admitted, then I won't force him. I can tend to him here." And he would do just that. "Not to intentionally change the subject, but what brings you to my door so early?"

“Uhh…” Alana nearly forgot why she had come here. “Jack was looking for Will. He sent me here to enlist your help, but I guess we don’t have to now.” She remarked getting up from Will’s side. “What do you want me to tell him?”

“Tell him I didn’t answer the door.” Hannibal said without pause. Normally he would be content to enjoy Alana’s company, but today was not that day. There were things he had to say to Will that she could not be privy to.

Waking

HADRIAN'S WALL:
942 AD

Tristan set the broth aside, taking his place beside Galahad on the bed. With the door closed and bolted, he could rest easy. No one would walk in on them. Reaching out, Tristan stroked Galahad's cheek, "Galahad, wake up." He called out gently. His lover mumbled reacting to his voice, but his eyes remained shut. "Wake up." Tristan tried again, this time Galahad's eyes fluttered open. "I hate to do this, you need rest, but you also have to eat." He put a small smile to his lips to reassure his lover.

Galahad hadn't remembered coming back to the fort. "When…?" he tried to speak but his voice sounded harsh, his throat feeling like he had swallowed sand. This left him with just the ability to nod and trying to sit up. His body wouldn't heed his command. Looking to Tristan, it made him feel worse, but he silently asked for help.

Rising from the edge of the bed, Tristan carefully lifted Galahad up, moving to sit behind him, to lend some of his strength. "How's that?" he whispered when Galahad rested fully against him. Through their clothing he could feel the heat bleeding off of his lover and into him. Tristan brought his left arm up and across Galahad's abdomen mindful of the angry wound. There would be no rest for him so long as the man he'd given his heart to was weakened by his injury. Tristan was going to be the only one to tend to Galahad, he made such claim to the healers when they had been there. That news hadn't been well received, but he didn't care.

Galahad could only nod once, he was still so tired, fighting the pain in his side. He didn't want to disappoint Tristan by passing out. They were knights, they had to be strong even through the worst pain. With as much strength as he could, Galahad rested his hand over the one Tristan had placed over his stomach. Weakly he clutched at Tristan's hand while the man he loved pressed gentle kisses to the top of his head. He alone was only ever able to see a different side to the surly Sarmatian knight. It was the gentle side, the side that smiled, and the side that loved him more than anything.

"Hey," Tristan smirked reaching over to grab the bowl of broth, "If you don't drink some, Venora'll kill you." Galahad tried to laugh, only it was nothing more than a wet cough. "Shh, shhh…" Tristan soothing waiting for his coughing fit to end. He settled a few seconds later, once more resting fully against Tristan's chest. "Ready?" Tristan asked, smiling lightly when Galahad nodded. Carefully he held the edge of the bowl to the injured man's lips, tipping it up slowly. Galahad took a few sips and then Tristan was pulling the edge away to give him a moment. "Again?" His love nodded leaving him to repeat the process. They did this a few more times until the broth was half consumed. He set the bowl aside, returning his arm to its former place across Galahad's waist.

Galahad felt stronger with the hot meal filling his stomach. “Did you speak to Arthur?” He asked hoping that Tristan had at least reported what they’d seen before being set upon by the Woad’s. “Did you tell him…?” Galahad bit his bottom lip as the wound in his side blazed with white hot pain. Compared to this, he would take sparring against Lancelot. At least with that punishment, all he would have earned would’ve been bruises. “Why can’t they leave the lands to the Woad’s and be done with this forsaken island?” Galahad snarled.

Tristan said nothing, choosing to wrap both arms around Galahad. That had been the same question he’d asked of Arthur when their Roman commander had sought to inquire about his Knights state. Of all the Roman’s here, Tristan could say Artorius was the only one he respected. Arthur was barely Roman, even as he wore the clothes of one of them. Careful about Galahad’s wound, Tristan moved from behind, and slowly lowered the younger man back to the bed so he could rest. “Rest now and save your strength.”

“Will you stay?” Galahad reached out, fisting his hand in Tristan’s shirt.

“Not even the gods could tear me from your side.” Tristan responded pulling the worn leather shirt from his body.

Tending

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND:
PRESENT

Will opened his eyes, the last flickering of a dying fire drawing his gaze to the right. Embers glowed in the dark of the room he was in. He knew this to be Hannibal's house. Gathering more of his strength, he tried to move, but there was a weight resting to his left. Turning his head as best he could, he saw Hannibal sleeping, his head barely touching Will's shoulder. That brought a smile to his lips. With as much effort as he could muster, he brought his right hand up, intent upon using the tip of his fingers to touch Hannibal's brow. His hand made it half way before a terrible coughing fit wracked his body sending waves of pain through him.

Hannibal jolted awake when Will started coughing violently. He quickly sat up, pulling Will up, resting the younger man against him. There was nothing he could do to stem this fit, Hannibal had to let him cough. The sound was familiar from the last time, from when Galahad had taken the arrow for him. Seconds ticked by until Will settled, his breathing coming in ragged gasps. Hannibal cupped his face, looking in Will's eyes, "What can I do?" He asked feeling foolish for some unknown reason. This was not how Hannibal Lecter would be acting. No, this was how Tristan would act. Maybe that was what was needed.

Will licked his dry lips feeling like his mouth held nothing more than sand, drying up all the saliva on his tongue. "Water," His request came out as gasp of air. Hannibal looked at him, smiled gently, leaned in and kissed his fevered brow before helping him to lie back down. Sitting up had felt good, until his ribs started to ache, compressing his lungs. Lying down was preferable, letting him breathe easier. It almost felt like a boulder was pressing down upon him.

Hannibal left the room, pausing but a moment to look at the front door to his left wondering if Alana had run straight to Jack, or if she would debate what she would do. Either way was of little concern to him now. All that matter was helping Will, and remembering their past. It would help them to move beyond the betrayal each had suffered from the other. Setting foot in the kitchen, Hannibal took a moment to draw in a few deep breaths. Seeing Will pale and weak caused a tidal wave of rage to roll through him.

From his place on the pallet, Will listened to Hannibal turn the tap on, run for a few second, and then he listened to two glasses being filled before the tap turned off. A smile tugged at his tired lips upon hearing Hannibal returned. He moved swiftly, silently, but Will could still tell that he was returning. He wasn't sure what it was that allowed him to know this, but he used it. Then his eyes were gazing upon Hannibal while in his minds eye he saw Tristan once more. Will closed his eyes at the sight.

Hannibal took his place next to Will setting his glass aside for a moment. With his right hand free, he cupped the back of Will's neck helping him to raise his head. Gratitude was shining

in his young paramour's eyes. "Sip slowly." Hannibal urged when Will's lips touched the rim of the drinking glass. After a few sip, he pulled the glass back to give Will a moment to get his breath. "Again?" Hannibal asked. Will glared at him mutedly. He chuckled lightly moving the glass back to Will's lips. Repeating this a few times, Hannibal set the tall glass on the low coffee table before taking his up to quench his own thirst.

"Do you have any of that soup you made me before?" Will asked finally able to speak without feeling like he was swallowing sandpaper. Hannibal chuckled, smiled, and then nodded. "I am really hungry." Using his left hand, he placed it on Hannibal's knee before he felt the tug of exhaustion again.

"I can make you some," Hannibal replied. "Slide back into sleep and when you wake, I'll be finished making you that broth." Leaning over he kissed Will's brow noticing that his fever had reduced further. He could guess that it was about 99.5. When Hannibal leaned back, Will's eyes were closed, his chest barely rising and falling. He left Will's side, returning to the kitchen.

Anger

HADRIAN'S WALL:
942 AD

A furious pounding pulled Tristan from the sleep he had managed to fall into just after dawn. Galahad had coughed most of the night leaving his sleep to last minutes at a time. Finally the young knight settled, exhaustion proving more powerful than the cough. Still, Tristan remained vigilant until he too succumbed. Now he was mad, turning his glare on the door. Careful of Galahad's body, he climbed out of bed, and went to the door pulling the bolt sharply to open the wooden barrier. "What?" He snapped at Bors who had been rude enough to wake him so early.

"Arthur's looking for you." Bors said peering over Tristan's shoulder. "How's the boy?" He'd been there when Tristan galloped through the roman fort with Galahad's horse close behind. Blood and wounds were nothing to a knight, but this felt different. Tristan looked different this time.

Tristan's first inclination was to growl, but Bors was a brother of the sword, a fellow knight, "Not good." He answered. "He was coughing during the night, blood at the corner of his mouth." Those words tasted foul rolling off his tongue. "He's been poisoned."

"Report this to Arthur…" Bors tried to cut through the worry clouding his friend. They all felt it, but none so more keenly than Tristan where Galahad was concerned

"No, I'm not leaving his side." Tristan argued careful to keep his voice from rising too high. "Galahad needs me." He snapped, his voice lacking conviction. It was more like, he needed Galahad. This only happened because he hadn't been paying attention, he'd been indulging his lover with talk of the future.

"Tristan…" Bors knew what lay between Galahad and Tristan; all the Sarmatian's did, but their secret was threating to spill over into Roman hands. "Don't do this to yourself. Your boy will be fine left unattended for a few hours."

"I won't leave him…" Tristan shook his head, and then looked back to Galahad. Blue eyes met his. Going back to the edge of the bed, Tristan tried to paint a smile on his lips. "You should be sleeping." He gently scolded pulling the thick woven blanket up under Galahad's chin. Only with him could Tristan be gentle.

"I know something's wrong with me." Galahad said weakly. When Tristan opened his mouth to lie, Galahad shook his head slowly. "I feel it like a weight upon my chest. Tristan, I can barely breathe deeply. I can taste blood in my mouth." He knew the guilt Tristan was feeling, hated that he was telling him how badly he was injured, but there was always truth between them.

“No,” Tristan lied weakly. “You’ll be fine.” He had to believe that for himself or else all would be meaningless in his world. Reaching out his hand, he brushed brown curls from Galahad’s brow feeling the fever still gripping him. “I refuse to lose you.”

“Then save me…” Galahad challenged as best he could. He knew his Tristan, knew that the world would tremble in fear should Tristan even have a mind to set it ablaze. Reaching out with his left hand, he placed it over his love’s heart feeling tears spring to his eyes. “Save me…”

Tristan leaned over Galahad, placing his lips to sweat soaked skin, he said, “You have more faith in me than I do.” Galahad chuckled through a cough. That was enough for him, he pulled back nodding, accepting the challenge. Without looking at Bors, Tristan said, “Tell Arthur I’ll be right there.” He didn’t look back when the door closed. To Galahad he said, “I’ll do whatever it takes to make you better.”

“First, go…” Galahad coughed violently again, the weight on his chest increasing. It took him longer than he would have liked to settle before he could speak again. Tristan was patient, even though he knew what would fall from Galahad’s lips. He pushed his hand into Tristan’s chest, nudging him to leave.

Reluctantly, Tristan rose from the edge of the bed heeding Galahad’s words. He didn’t want to, but he knew he needed to. With a heavy heart Tristan left the room fighting the urge to put his fist into the wall. Before he was to face Arthur he would have to pull his mask back into place. To the roman world he was a cold unfeeling killer; that’s who he needed to be right now if he was to save Galahad.

Cooking

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND:
PRESENT

Hannibal stood at the stove stirring the broth letting the bones of the black Chinese bird mix together with the wolfberries, ginseng, ginger, red dates, and star anise. He was so consumed with preparing the meal that he nearly missed Will standing in the open doorway. Looking up, his heart seized in his chest. “What are you doing up?” Leaving the stove, Hannibal went to Will taking his arm across his shoulders. He then wrapped his right arm around Will’s waist guiding him to the brown leather chair tucked in the corner of his kitchen.

Will sat down slowly under Hannibal’s guidance. “I was hungry,” He said, “and lonely.” A smile curled his lips up. He took as deep of a breath as he could, taking in the scent of the soup. “I could smell that from the other room.” Will mumbled resting fully in the chair. He exerted more energy than he’d meant to on his trek from the sitting room to the kitchen. Will sensed that Hannibal wanted to keep him close to assure him that he was still alive and Will wanted to be close to him. Knowing of their past, remembering it bit by bit, made him see Hannibal in a new light.

Hannibal shook his head, “It’s almost ready. I thought you would sleep a while longer.” He arched his brow, gently scolding Will with a look. “You should be resting, not moving around the house.” Though, Hannibal was glad Will was in the kitchen where he could keep an eye on him. He’d fought the urge to keep going back into the sitting room to check on a sleeping Will while the soup cooked. Hannibal forced himself to remain in one room while he controlled the anger burning through him. It outraged him to see that someone had dared to lay a blade to his precious Will.

“I know you’re angry.” Will said letting his loll back. He was too tired to hold it up. There was a sense of familiarity surrounding them. The last time he’d had soup, Hannibal had made it for him, and the time before that that he could remember Tristan had sat behind him, holding the bowl to his lips.

“Oh,” Hannibal arched his brows up. “And how can you tell that?” He asked stirring the broth again. It was good to have Will with him, looking in his eyes with trust. Hannibal found he missed that.

“Because you’re trying not to let me see it,” Will answered shifting to his left side, taking pressure from his right. “I know you…” For a second he debated using the name lingering on his tongue. “Tristan… I know you.”

“As I know you, Galahad,” Hannibal replied smiling to Will. Taking the ladle from the pot, he covered the dish with the lid and once again stepped from the stove to return to Will. Hannibal caressed Will’s face, leaning over with the intent of stealing a kiss when the front

doorbell rang. Instead a growl rumbled in his chest. “Twice in one day.” He grumbled looking down at Will. His young man smiled. “I’m sorry, I’ll be right back.”

Standing outside, Jack Crawford looked down at the porch seeing small traces of blood still marring the otherwise pristine concrete porch of Hannibal’s house. He’d had a talk with Alana Blood a few hours ago when she came into his office very concerned about Will in Hannibal’s care. They had caught a case early in the morning that required Will’s particular skill set, but the man had seemingly vanished until Alana let him know that Will was with Hannibal Lecter. That concerned Jack as well, considering Will was using all his strength to convince everyone that Hannibal was a serial killer, eating his victims. A few more seconds slipped by before the door opened with Hannibal standing on the other side. “Good afternoon Doctor.” Jack greeted.

Not wanting to waste time, Hannibal said, “Alana talked to you I take it.” He moved aside, allowing Jack to enter, it would’ve been rude not to let him inside after all. Right now he had nothing to hide, at least nothing of consequence. Though, he would have preferred to have a little more time alone with Will, and the memories rising between them. “I knew it was a matter of time before she told you.”

“I came to check on him.” Jack said following Hannibal into the kitchen where Will was sitting in the chair, eyes closed almost seemingly asleep. “He’s not looking too good.” Jack commented moving further into the kitchen, closer to Will.

“He’s on the mend.” Hannibal assured. “I was just making him a healing broth. Would you like to stay?” He offered keeping his eyes on the slumbering Will.

Hope

HADRIAN'S WALL:
942 AD

Arthur Castus, commander of the Sarmatian Knights stationed at the Wall, stood with his second in command Lancelot, looking over a map of the scouted area of Britain discussing the attack on Tristan and Galahad when a knock sounded at the door. Jols opened it with Tristan coming in, his head bowed, worry still furrowing his brow. "Tristan, is Galahad…?" Arthur feared to finish that question. They'd only lost Percival two months ago.

"He clings to life, but barely." Tristan answered. "He's been poisoned." He grit his teeth tightly to make sure his words did not waver, did not show his anger at the Woad's, at Merlin, or at the Roman's for bringing them to this land where they did not belong. To Arthur he said, "Your Roman doctors can't help him," Taking a step further into the room, he said, "But I know who can."

"Who?" Lancelot spoke up drawing the attention of Tristan. All of them had been on edge knowing one of their own could be slipping into death. Their end was ever present on this island, fighting the Woad's, trying to survive.

"The Lady of the Lake," Tristan answered without hesitation. This would be Galahad's only hope; he had to make his commander see that while trying to contain his guilt, his anger, and his desperation. He needed to do this to feel like he was actually doing something to help.

"What makes you think she'll help you?" Lancelot asked seeing the desperation in his comrade's eyes. The last time they sought out the crazy hermit, they'd each paid a heavy price in blood. Woad's had set upon them. The Lady went into hiding after that.

"She despises Merlin enough to help us." Tristan replied, and then turned his attention to Arthur. "Let me seek her out, let me ask for her help. I can find her quickly." He promised. There was disbelief in Arthur's eyes, not in him, but in the willingness that the Lady of the Lake wanted to be found. "I have to try…"

"Lancelot, leave us." Arthur commanded throwing a look to his friend that said not to disobey him. Lancelot nodded, leaving the room, and closing the door behind him. To Tristan he said, "Give me one good reason I should let you go beyond the wall to track her down." There had been talk about Tristan and Galahad, Arthur hadn't wanted to listen to it, but now he had to take it into consideration.

Tristan knew he had a moment where he could lie to his commander, to a man who had become his friend, but he chose to tell the truth, "I'm not good at sitting around watching him slip away." Tristan took a breath, steadying his nerve. "He's all I have left of my home, my clan." Bringing his hand up, he threaded his fingers through his hair brushing it back from his face. "You've no doubt heard talk about us…"

“I pay it no attention.” Arthur said. To him it didn’t really matter. Tristan and Galahad were his knights. They fought honorably. They fought when he commanded them to. “To me, you and Galahad are far removed from the pettiness of the Roman soldiers. When I call upon you to fight, you do so without hesitation.” He said strongly.

“Then let me do this.” Tristan said determination ringing in his tone. “Let me put right the mistake I made…”

“No.” Arthur shook his head. There was no way he would allow Tristan, in the raw state he was in, beyond the wall on his own. Anything could happen.

“Arthur…” Tristan wanted to stumble back in disbelief that he was being denied.

“We do this together, as Knights.” Arthur clarified reaching out, placing his hand on Tristan’s shoulder. “Galahad’s survival is on all our shoulders, not just yours. We protect each other.”

“When do we leave?” Tristan asked gaining a renewed sense of hope for Galahad’s recovery.

Avoiding

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND:
PRESENT

Hannibal could barely hide his sense of relief when Jack chose not to stay. It gave him more time alone with Will, more time for them to decide how much of their former life they wanted to remember while Will healed from his attack. Letting Will sleep more, Hannibal served up two bowls of the broth, setting them on the small table beside the leather chair. Then, gently, he touched Will's face to rouse from sleep. His touch alone wasn't working. So, Hannibal leaned in setting his lips to Will's cheek. "Will, wake up for me." Pulling back, he smiled when Will's eyes fought to stay closed. "Come now, wake up."

Will was being called out of the dark by the one voice he trusted. Reluctantly he opened his eyes to see Hannibal smiling at him. "I fell asleep again?" He asked knowing that he'd done just that. Mindful of his wound, he stretched his arms up and over his head. "What'd I miss?" This was the most he'd slept in months, and it only took him being attacked, at least he assumed he'd been attacked, to force him to catch up on his slumber. "Who was at the door?" Will asked when Hannibal didn't answer him. Turning in the chair, resting on his left side, he took the spoon in his hand so he could start eating.

Hannibal nodded knowing that now he could never keep things from Will. "It was Jack at the front door. He came inquiring about you." He said, sighed, and then added, "Alana was here this morning, she saw you, and told Jack about it. I tried to keep her from mentioning you were here, but…"

"She told him anyway," Will finished. He took a mouthful of the broth, swallowing, and resisted the urge to moan at the simple pleasure of having a hot meal settle in his belly. "Did I say anything while Alana was here?" In the moments he'd been conscious he'd mumbled Tristan's name over and over. He was curious if he'd said anything else.

"No, you were deep in sleep, fighting a fever," Hannibal answered before taking some of the soup into his mouth. "She scolded me about not taking you to the hospital. I told her you refused." He chuckled at that. Alana had said that she wasn't a professional scold, but where Will was concerned that was all she seemed to do in her own unique way. "Or you would have, had I asked you." Hannibal grinned when Will looked at him.

"I take it she didn't like that answer," Will muttered setting his spoon aside for a moment. He touched the wound along his side and coughed lightly. Heat bled through his bandage under the white t-shirt Hannibal no doubt had dressed him in. All of this felt too familiar, to the point Will almost expected to close his eyes, open them, and be back in Britain fighting to defend the last outpost of the Roman Empire. When he did open his eyes, his life was still here, he was still in Baltimore, and Hannibal was in front of him concern racing through his eyes. "I'm ok." He said to reassure him.

Hannibal shook off Will's words, placing his hand to hem of the shirt, carefully tugging it up on the right side. A sigh escaped him. He'd been careless and not watching the time when he had to change the bandage. "Blood's seeped through the gauze. It needs to be changed." Hannibal feared what he would find beneath the bloody bandage. He didn't want to see deadly black lines moving from the wound, across Will's chest, and to his heart. Going through this as Tristan had nearly destroyed him with worry. Hannibal wasn't sure he could go through this a second time.

"Can't it wait?" Will asked bringing his right hand up to Hannibal's face. "I haven't finished eating." He saw Hannibal wanted to protest, but he held back, nodding, and removed himself from in front of Will going back to his seat. Will wanted to distract Hannibal for a little while longer before they set to the task of removing the bandage, cleaning the wound, and replacing it with a fresh one. He feared what his wound would reveal, whether or not there would be vicious black line trekking towards his heart. When he'd been Galahad, he'd barely survived the poison. Will wasn't sure if he would escape that fate a second time.

Guilt

HADRIAN'S WALL:
942 AD

Tristan returned to Galahad's side seeing his lover had returned to sleep. It was better that he slept while he attended to his wound. Pulling the laces of Galahad's shirt apart, Tristan saw there was fresh blood bleeding through the top of the bandage. The sight made him angry. Removing the bloody cloth, he moved to the other end of the room gathering up the basing and a sponge to cleanse the wound. Keeping his touch light, Tristan swiped the coarse sponge around the arrow hole. As more of the dried blood was removed he saw black line spreading out from the jagged edges, going toward Galahad's heart. Tristan set the basin of the blood water aside. For now he would leave the wound open to the air while he dug through his trunk to find the right medicinal herbs to mix together in a poultice.

Galahad hadn't realized that he'd fallen asleep until he woke up with his shirt open and Tristan sitting beside him putting some sort of paste on a fresh bandage. "I didn't think I was strong enough for this." He joked gaining his lover's attention, but it was not a smile he received, it was a frown. "What's the matter?" Galahad asked forcing himself to sit up and look down at his side. Then, no explanation was required. "Poison."

"Yes, the idiot Roman's physician's didn't notice it." Tristan snapped. "I'm making this poultice to try and stem the progression of the poison." Setting the smaller bowl aside, he took his place once more on the edge of the bed setting the coated scrap of clean cloth to the wound. Galahad hissed, but made no move to pull away. Taking Galahad's left hand, he had him hold pressure as he picked up the roll of bandage that he could use to hold the medicine in place. "I spoke to Arthur." Tristan said.

"And?" Galahad asked arching his back slightly to allow Tristan easy access to wrap his wound. "What'd he say?" But Tristan wasn't talking. Normally that wouldn't bother him. Today it did. "Will you tell me what he said," Galahad snapped with more strength than he thought he had. Tristan was avoiding answering him and it was worrying him.

"We're leaving at first light to track down the Lady of the Lake." Tristan finally said tying off the fresh bandage. "The weight upon your chest, the blood in your mouth, and now the black lines, she may hold the cure to this poison." He didn't want to offer false hope when he wasn't sure they would succeed. The Lady of the Lake was fickle; she would either help them or try to kill them.

"Arthur agreed to this?" Galahad questioned. "He's going to let you do this? She's insane!" He shouted bringing about another coughing fit. Tristan pulled him close, holding him until his quieted. In return Galahad wrapped his arms around Tristan feeling the stability the man gave him. "Don't go…" He muttered through his coughing.

Tristan pulled back, guilt tearing at the core of his being, “I have to go. This happened to you because of me, because I wasn’t paying attention.” He cupped Galahad’s face, his thumbs caressing his lover’s cheeks. “How can you still love me after I allowed you to be injured?” He couldn’t believe his arrogance; his over estimation of his abilities brought them to this point.

“Tristan, this isn’t your fault.” Galahad whispered kissing Tristan’s tattooed cheek lovingly. “I was glad that I was with you when I was hurt. You’d move the heavens to get me to safety.” He repeated the kiss on his other cheek. “This is not your fault.” Galahad repeated. “And, I wish you wouldn’t go back out into danger, but knowing you the way that I do, asking you to stay would be wrong.”

Tristan smiled sadly, “It’s never wrong for you to want me to remain at your side. I never want to be far from your loving arms.” He pulled back to allow Galahad to slip back to the bed to rest. Leaving the bed for a moment, he went to the door, to shut and bar it, before returning to his loves side. Tristan stretched out beside Galahad, reaching his hand down to lace their fingers together. “Go back to sleep,” Tristan urged feeling the tug himself. While he could, he turned his face to Galahad so he could place light kisses to his lover’s temple. Sleep would be good for both of them. He would need his strength for when he ventured beyond the wall with the others.

Relief

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND:
PRESENT

After they'd eaten, Will allowed Hannibal to help him upstairs so they could clean his wound in the bathroom. He sat on the edge of the claw foot tub with Hannibal beside him. Fingers curled into the hem of his shirt, pulling it up forcing him to lift his arm so the while fabric could be removed. The chilled air caressed his heated skin making him shiver, and in the process he tugged at the sutures at his side. Will wanted to look down, to check to make sure deathly black lines were racing towards his heart. Then Hannibal's arm came across his chest, pulling him back against him. Automatically Will's hand came up gripping Hannibal's wrist; feeling the scar.

"You want me to look" Hannibal asked sensing the unease roiling through Will. He was nervous about what he would find should he look. A few seconds slipped by with Will not saying anything, and then his head jerked up and down as his reply. Hannibal squeezed Will's left shoulder and then angled his head to look down the line of Will's chest. A sigh of relief escaped at seeing the red skin around the black sutures. There was a normal amount of redness that indicated healing nothing more. "No lines." Hannibal breathed out and then kissed the side of Will's head.

Will leaned back into Hannibal, "Thank the gods for small miracles." He sighed resting his temple against Hannibal's chin. "If I'd been poisoned, finding the Lady of the Lake would prove difficult." He remarked sarcastically. Behind him, Hannibal's chest rumbled with laughter. They could take a moment to breathe easy, to revel in the fact that there was no poison racing through him with the intent on killing him. "Now that's out of the way, what now?" Will asked.

Hannibal moved from behind Will, going to the counter he washed his hands. "We should change the bandage and then we should talk about where we go from here." Hot water touched his hands masking the fact they were shaking. Hannibal was feeling much of the anxiety that he'd previously known as Tristan when faced with Galahad's imminent death. Though, this time, his anxiety was being chased away with relief. Rinsing the soap from his hands, he dried them, and then took the small basin of peroxide and saline mixed together. It would clean the wound and help in healing.

Will leaned back when Hannibal returned to the edge of the tub. "You mean how are we going incorporate out previous lives with the ones we have now?" He asked and then hissed when Hannibal touched the wash cloth to his wound. "I wish I knew what to do with all these memories floating around." Will sighed, "I don't know if I want to hit you or kiss you or run screaming from my sanity." He muttered.

Hannibal looked up, “You want to kiss me?” His tone took on a teasing note. “Because I want to kiss you,” He said before turning his attention back to cleaning the fresh blood from the stitches. There were only miniscule dots, but he would feel better when it was cleaned. Will didn’t answer him. He was thinking, weighing the right words he could use that would convey what he was feeling from the past and at this very moment. Pulling back, Hannibal stood up from the edge of the tub to set the basin and cloth back on the counter. He then returned with the rectangular gauze pad and the silk tape.

“Then do it,” Will finally said once his injury was covered. Hannibal’s head shot up to link their gazes together. There wasn’t shock in his gaze, it was desire, it was longing, and it was happiness. Hannibal angled his head, barely touching his lips to Will’s, freezing for a moment before passion flared between them. He draped his arm over Hannibal’s shoulder, his fingers tangling in the hair at the nape of his neck. Their lips pressed together, tongues dancing, and their breathing nothing but gasps. He pulled back when the stitches pull making him grumble in pain. “Guess we’ll have to wait for that.” Will chuckled.

Hannibal smiled, kissing Will’s forehead. “Stay with me,” He pleaded gently. “Tonight sleep in my bed, don’t go home.” This need was rising to a boiling point; so much so that Hannibal wasn’t sure he could lock it down should Will leave him. Cupping his face, Hannibal kissed Will’s brow over and over while repeating, “Stay with me.” Will’s other arms slid up Hannibal’s chest, draping over his shoulder. Hannibal waited with baited breath for Will to answer him, any answer. He needed to hear Will speak to him, to know what was running through his mind. “Say you’ll stay.”

“I wouldn’t want to sleep anywhere else but with you.” Will replied in a rush. Hannibal smiled in return, “But, I have to go home to feed the dogs.” Together they laughed.

The Quest

HADRIAN'S WALL:
942 AD

Before dawn, Tristan rose from the bed, kissed the sleeping Galahad goodbye, and gotten dressed. He left heavy of heart not knowing if he would accomplish his mission to save the man he loved. Each step he took, his mind screamed at him to turn around, to return to Galahad's side, and trust in Arthur to do what had to be done. Tristan growled to himself. He was going to be the one to save his love, no one else. Entering the round table room he nodded to Arthur he consorted with Lancelot and Gawain. Without pause, he strode over there to look at the map of the last known location for the Lady of the Lake.

"Tristan, we didn't expect you so soon." Arthur said knowing he was going to have to tell his knight to remain behind when more than anything he needed to make himself feel useful.

"You said you were leaving at first light. Which means you have go over the plans now." Tristan replied turning the map in his direction. He knew the area, knew secret path's, he best hunting trails, and he knew where to hide. If anyone was going to get them there in one piece it would be Tristan.

"Then by all means, tell us what we need to know." Arthur said resting his hands on the table. He knew they needed Tristan's information. Among them, Tristan was the best tracker, hunter; he constantly honed his skills.

"She's known to reside along the west bank, occasionally going up into the mountains where there are caves. She takes refuge in these main tunnels, but only when the weathers turns." Tristan motioned to the region. "She watches this path as it is the only one people use, but Galahad and I found another way." He paused gripping his hand. "If you approach from the east bank across the river under the cover of the fog, she won't see you. It's two days hard from here" Tristan turned the map back around for the others and then asked, "So, when do we leave?"

Lancelot spoke this time, "We're not." Before the tracker could argue he continued speaking, "You're staying here to watch over Galahad. Someone has to keep him calm, keep him resting, and we all know that you're better at keeping him on his back than others." Lancelot said calmly fielding the glare of promised pain from Tristan.

"I'm going to be there. I should be the one to face her, to bargain for Galahad's life." Tristan looked to Arthur, "I thought we settled this?"

"We did," Arthur nodded coming to stand in front of Tristan. "Look at your hands, Tristan." His knight held his gaze in defiance. "Tristan… look down." Arthur said again, this time with more command in his voice.

Tristan didn't want to, but he did. He looked down to see his hands shaking. "I can still guide you there." He knew he was barely holding it together, barely functioning. All he knew as that he had to keep moving, keep planning; anything so he wouldn't think about losing Galahad.

"And if we run into trouble, how are you to draw your bow?" Arthur asked. "Tristan, you must remain here." He knew it was hard to hear, but it had to be said. "You need to focus on him."

"And watch him die?" Tristan snapped. There was the root of his fear, watching Galahad slip into a painful sleep and not wake up. He couldn't sit idly by while the others were risking their lives for his error.

"Let him have hope." Arthur placed his hand on Tristan's shoulder. "Hope will keep him going longer than you think." Taking a close look, Arthur then asked. "Have you eaten, slept at all?"

"A handful of hours here and there," Tristan answered not remembering the last time he ate. It was really all a blur. He could only focus on Galahad. "I don't really know much beyond that." His voice faded into a whisper. He'd been so focused on tending to Galahad that he'd forgotten about himself.

"Then go back to your room, fall into bed, and rest." Arthur advised. He knew, in Tristan's stead, had Lancelot being injured and poisoned, he would have taken on any enemy to ensure his friend's continued survival. "You'll be no good to Galahad like this." Arthur whispered.

Tristan knew Arthur was right, he hated it even, but this once he would do as he was told. Nodding sharply, he turned and left the room, trudging back to the quarters he shared with Galahad. His steps seemed to take longer than he thought. Or maybe it was because he was just so tired. Finally the door was in sight. Tristan fell against it, pushing it open to see his love still on the bed. Closing the door, he shed the clothes he donned, and crawled back into bed next to Galahad. He listening to his lover barely drawing breath.

Talking

WOLF TRAP, VIRGINIA:
PRESENT

Will opened the door of his house with Hannibal at his side. His dogs were there waiting for him, scattered yips and small barks greeted him when he stepped inside. If Hannibal hadn't been close behind him, the dogs would have toppled him over with their excitement at seeing him. "Ok, guys, I'm here," He laughed taking a small step through the fray of his four legged family. "Back up." He ordered and they readily obeyed going to sit by or on their dog beds waiting for them to be completely in the house. Will leaned heavily on the door trying to hold on to the strength he'd managed to get back from resting and from Hannibal's attention. The hour long drive from Hannibal's home to his farm had taxed him. Will could feel himself bottoming out.

Hannibal moved close to Will, slipping his left arm around Will's waist. He could tell his young man was about ready to pass out. "Let me help," Hannibal whispered pulling Will's arm across his shoulder's helping him away from the door. With the heel of his shoe, Hannibal pushed the door closed, and then guided Will over to the bed. It was a small favor that Will chose to live in one room of his modest farm house. Will dropped to the edge of the bed, fighting with everything he had to stay upright. "Lie down." Hannibal ordered gently pushing Will back into the bed.

"Hannibal…" Will slurred resisting the fatigue for as long as he could. "You don't have to do this." He rushed to get the words out before he felt he was going to pass out. "I feel like I did that night I shot Abel Gideon, sort of half here and…" His body was winning out, demanding another span of rest that he couldn't deny.

Hannibal smirked when Will stretched out, his head hitting the pillow. He sat down on the edge, placing his hand lightly on Will's abdomen. "Just rest and I'll take care of the dogs." Will grumbled a muddled argument making Hannibal shake his head. "I want to do it." Before Will could attempt to argue in his weakened condition, Hannibal moved away from the bed going down the short hall to the kitchen whistling for the dogs to follow him.

Will was floating on a cloud of exhaustion mixed with the edges of rising pain. Since meeting Hannibal Lecter his world had turned upside down and inside out, but it also helped him to bring him to the man he'd known in another life; a man despite his penchant for killing, Will had been, will be, happy with. He'd been alone for far too long with no one to share the darkness running through his mind. Yes, Hannibal had torn him down, but he was helping to build him back up. With Hannibal like he had been with Tristan, his gift wouldn't be hindered, it would be given a chance to grow.

Hannibal moved about the small kitchen fixing the dogs meal in their bowls. It wasn't the gourmet style that he was used to making, but dog were easy to please. When each dish was

put together, he made sure they stayed where they were as he set the bowls on the tiled floor at equal distance apart from the other. Once the last bowl was on the floor, Hannibal commanded, “Eat.” The dogs eagerly obeyed him. Hannibal chuckled lightly at the sight of them. He went back to the living room where Will was stretched out on the bed, his right arm covering his eyes. “Will, what if we left the country?”

Will gave himself a few seconds to believe what he was hearing. Pulling his arm away he looked at Hannibal in the dark of his house. “Wait… you mean like tonight? Leave the country tonight?”

“No, not tonight, traveling would do you more harm than good.” Hannibal clarified, “But if I were to leave would you come with me?” He asked again.

“Where would we go?” Will asked levering himself up, resting back on his forearms. He wasn’t saying no. He doubted, now that he knew who he used to be, who Hannibal used to be, that he would ever want to be in a country without him.

“Anywhere we want,” Hannibal answered hearing Will’s unspoken acceptance of leaving with him. “We could go to Rome, or Britain.”

Will scoffed at the first two locations. “I will never see Rome.” He refused. “Britain stole my life, you died there, and I’ve…” He stopped talking and then suggested, “How about we meet in the middle; France.”

Hannibal smiled, “You would willing move to France? I did not think you the type to want to live there.” He teased.

“If it means never seeing the remnants of once vast empire that forced our forefathers to sell their sons into slavery for fifteen years, then yes, I would live in France with you.” Will replied passionately. His renewed disgust for all things Roman flowed through him. “When would we leave?” Will asked lightly.

“As soon as I could set things in place.” Hannibal answered. He already had a place where they could go; the villa his uncle deeded to him. “We’ll do this?”

“Yes,” Will answered, “Provided they come with me.” He jerked his chin in the direction of his dogs. They were standing in the room watching them. Hannibal nodded slowly knowing that Will wouldn’t want to abandon them for any reason. “I can’t leave them behind.”

“Then we won’t.” Hannibal agreed.

Reprieve

HADRIAN'S WALL:
942 AD

Galahad woke when the morning sun streamed in through the half closed curtains surrounding the bed. He tested his chest, taking a deep breath. It still hurt, but he found that he was breathing easier because of the poultice Tristan had placed over his open wound. He was surprised to find that he had more energy than he had the last three days. Turning his head to the side, he was happy to see Tristan asleep beside him. Only in sleep could his love seem so gentle, so at peace. Forcing himself up, he climbed out of bed. Sucking in a breath, he braced his hand on the wall to keep from falling. Once he had his balance, he lowered himself down into the chair to watch over Tristan for a while the way he'd been watched over.

Tristan stretched out his arm, searching for Galahad, when he felt an empty space next to him. Waking up, he was about to panic when his eyes caught sight of him sitting in the chair. He breathed a sigh of relief. "What are you doing out of bed?" Tristan asked sitting up quickly, feeling his head spin as if he'd been drinking all night. "You should be resting. Get back to bed." He ordered standing up to tower over Galahad, to seem imposing.

"I feel stronger." Galahad defended. "And it's not like I left the room and jumped on a horse to track down the Woad's that did this to me." He added resting his left hand over his injury. "I stayed to look after you like did for me."

Tristan rubbed his hand over his mouth, the bristles of his beard scratching his palm. "Have you eaten?" He asked dropping his hand, avoiding the fact that he was still here rather than out beyond the wall tracking down the Lady of the Lake.

"No, and I'm not really that hungry." Galahad answered, lying marginally. "Why didn't you leave with the others? I know you wanted to." Last night Tristan had been more than determined to go beyond the wall, to find the Lady, and be able to keep his word.

Tristan moved to the door, his instinct to evade and run kicking in, but Galahad deserved better from him. Turning back, he replied, "Arthur ordered me to stay." He held up his left hand that still shook. "I wouldn't be of any use to them out there beyond the wall. My hands shook too much to be able to draw a bow string back."

Galahad levered himself up and out of the chair, crossing the room to go to Tristan. He miss stepped, falling into Tristan. His lovers arms came around him, pressure against his wound drawing a yelp from him. That pain didn't matter, Galahad wrapped his arms around Tristan, and held him close. "I'm glad he made you stay." He slurred. "I couldn't be here, going through this, without you."

Tristan held Galahad as tight as he dared, “I am too.” He replied not knowing until this moment how he felt about remaining behind. The shaking in his hands, the way his mind only focused on Galahad, he would have gotten himself, and everyone else killed if they would have been attacked. “I’m no good to them out there, not with you hurt.” Tristan kissed Galahad’s brow tenderly. “Want to get something to eat?”

“Yeah,” Galahad said laughing a little. Tristan smiled knowingly at him, moving to his side, and taking Galahad’s left arm across his shoulders. He rested fully on Tristan, trusting the strength of his lover. Reaching out, his hand pulled the door open to a silent hall. Workers were about their normal routines, no one would see them walking around. No would see two noble knights looking beaten down and disheveled.

Hall after hall, Tristan and Galahad slowly traversed until they reached the fortress hall where, when all of them were gathered together, normally shared meals. It would be quiet, it would allow them to speak freely with each other. Though. Tristan wasn’t sure what they would speak on. Pushing open the door to the hall, they saw Jols, Dagonet, and Bors sitting together. Suddenly coming here wasn’t such a good idea.

Bors looked towards the open doors and exclaimed, “Look whose back from the land of the dead!” He laughed and drank some wine in honor of Galahad. Pulling the goblet from his lips, Bors added a toned down cry of “Rus!”

“Thanks Bors,” Galahad laughed, it mixed with a cough. “It’s good to be on my feet.” He said forcing himself to pull away from Tristan, to show his strength as a knight. Galahad stepped closer to the table, bracing his hand on the edge of the round table. He took a seat as carefully as he could without giving away just how badly he was injured. Galahad had to portray strength.

Tristan walked around the table, going for the food placed in front of Bors and Dagonet. While Galahad proved himself to the other two battle hardened knights, he filled two plates for them. He couldn’t help but to feel immense pride in how his lover was handling this. Perhaps they would survive the rest of their contracted years here on this island. Tristan just hoped Arthur made it back in time. The poultice would only halt the poison for so long before Galahad was back in bed, barely breathing, and coughing blood. Looking back to Galahad, Tristan made sure to keep the worry off of his face. For now he could fool himself into thinking that everything was going to be alright.

A Promise

WOLF TRAP, VIRGINIA:
PRESENT

Will hadn't remembered when he'd fallen asleep, but he was waking up in his bed with the sun streaming in. For a moment he was disoriented, then it all came rushing back to him. A smile, real and full of happiness spread across his lips. Before he could stop it, Will started to laugh. He didn't know why he was, he just felt like laughing. Maybe it was because of the turn his life had taken. Maybe it was because he was giving up everything he ever knew for a man who was a killer and a cannibal. Maybe it was because he was finally happy, finally able to accept what was happening in his life. Or it could be Will had finally lost his mind and Hannibal was the only anchor in his life that had any semblance of truth for him. Whatever it was, he was happy it happened to him when it did. Sitting up in bed, he looked around, half expecting to find Hannibal had left him to return to his spacious house in Baltimore, but he was surprised and pleased to find the man slumped in one of his chairs much as he had been when he'd been by Abigail's bed. With more strength gained from a deep healing sleep Will got up, going to his Hannibal. He reached out, the tip of his index finger touching Hannibal's cheek, right where he remembered facial tattoos Tristan wore with pride. "Tristan…." Will called out gently.

Hannibal had spent his night draped in one of Will's old chairs that looked to have seen better days while hiding how comfortable they were. He'd only intended to sit for a few hours watching, waiting, to make sure Will was deep in sleep before he stretched out on the bed next to him, but the exhaustion of the last few days had taken its toll on Hannibal as well. Before he knew it was slipping into the deep black abyss that was sleep. Then he heard his name being called in the dark, pulling him back into the waking world where all he knew was but memory. Simpler times spent at a remote outpost with the one he loved. Hannibal's eyes fluttered open to find Will standing before him, the tips of his fingers touching his cheek were his tattoos had been. "Is it morning already?" He turned his face into the palm of Will's hand, lips touching warm skin. Hannibal was surprised when Will cupped his face, tipping his head back, and bringing his lips down upon his. He gasped into the kiss, let the fresh wave of desire race through him. The last few days had seemed like a dream, nothing more than pale shadow returned to them from the past. Everything that had been happening to them had felt like déjà vu, but this time Hannibal would ensure everything turned out differently. He and Will would leave, live life on their terms.

Will pulled back, had to bring oxygen into his lungs as he rested his brow to Hannibal's. "I feared this was all a dream." He spoke, giving voice to the dark thought flitting through his mind. "Are we really here? Are we really together?" More than anything, he feared that this was an elaborate dream his mind concocted to prove to him that he was really insane and still in that state hospital under the corrupt care of Frederick Chilton.

Hannibal rose from the chair, pressing the front of his body to Will, keeping his paramour's hands to his face. "We'll always be together. Whether as Tristan and Galahad, or as Will and Hannibal." He answered fiercely. "Now that I have you," Hannibal kissed Will quickly, "I'm not letting you go." Hannibal mirrored Will, bring his hands up to cup Will's bearded cheeks. "I can't face this life without you, not now, and not ever."

"Make me a promise," Will's voice trembled as he spoke. "I want you to swear to always tell me the truth like you used to when I used to call you Tristan." Was he opening a can of worms by making Hannibal promise this to him? Did it really matter? Perhaps not. Will his pervious memories returning, Will already knew Hannibal was a killer. It was who he'd been as Tristan; skilled and deadly.

"I swear it." Hannibal said without hesitation. "Now you swear it to me." He countered. Truthfulness had to work both ways. There was a lot left between them that needed the cold harsh light of honesty.

"I swear," Will replied taking a deep breath before taking a step back. "If we're going to do this then I need to tell you something." He reached behind him, feeling for the edge of the bed so he could sit down. Will took a deep calming breath, held it, and then let it out before speaking. "When I was incarcerated, when I sent Beverly after you," He looked up sensing Hannibal about to protest, Will merely said, "I know it was you, because I know you. Jack started to listen to me." He confessed. Hannibal's face was an unreadable mask able to fool the masses, but not to Will, not anymore. "Jack suspects you now and I'm…" He couldn't say he was sorry. It was too cliché, too common place.

A flash of anger went through Hannibal, but it died quickly seeing the true remorse Will had etched into his face. He crossed the short distance to the bed to stand in front of Will. Reaching out, he tipped his love's head back so their gazes could link. "It doesn't matter. We'll be gone before "Uncle Jack" has any chance to arrest us." The admission of betrayal stung for but a moment because Hannibal knew it was only the scales being balanced against him for Will's incarceration in such a wretched place. "I promise we'll be long gone."

Disappointment

HADRIAN'S WALL:
942 AD

The day slipped by with Galahad's strength fading. Tristan finally managed to get him back to bed, cleaned his wound, changed the poultice, and replaced the bandage with a new one. Night had fallen with Tristan breathing a sigh of relief that Galahad was once more in the arms of slumber. Tristan found himself up on the wall looking out over the dark landscape of Britain hoping for word from Arthur. With worry furrowing his brow, Tristan twisted the copper ring on his right ring finger. What if Arthur didn't make it? How much longer could Galahad go one? The poison was already halfway to his heart. As it stood now, he was looking at four more days, possibly less than that.

"RIDERS APPROACHING!"

Tristan broke free of his worries when a Roman centurion shouted. "Arthur…" He breathed out running along the wall walk towards the centurion who had spotted the riders. He skidded to a halt looking out into the night. All he could make out was the shadows of two white horses. Arthur and Gawain's mounts were white. Tristan moved from the gap and called down to the centuries at the gate, "OPEN IT!" He shouted. He knew it was Arthur and the others.

"We wait!" The centurion shouted back.

Tristan wanted to kill the ignorant Roman. Snarling he went back to the wall to wait for the rider to come closer. Then, something in the shifting darkness caught his attention. They were being pursued. To his left he saw a bow and a quiver of arrows. Without a second though he retrieved both items. Raising the bow, and arrow to the string, he pulled back centering his gaze on the figures moving in the dark. Between the beats of his heat, Tristan released the arrow knowing it would find its mark.

"This is Arthur Castus! Open the gate!"

Tristan dropped to the stone walk, covering his mouth, his breathing coming hard and fast. He gave himself for as long as it took the centurions to raise the gate to panic, to let his mind run in a hundred different directions before he would collect himself and be the knight Arthur knew him to be. Grunts and groans filled his ears forcing him to stand, to pull his mask into place and greet Arthur upon entering through the gate. Running down the stone steps, his boots touched the ground just as Arthur, Lancelot and Gawain entered. They were painted in blood. Tristan feared what this would mean for Galahad.

Arthur dismounted from his horse, handing the reigns to one of the centurions. He had to get Tristan away from the others. "Let's talk inside." On a good day Tristan was deadly, given that the person he loved was dying, Arthur wasn't sure what he would do now.

Tristan backed away, “No, you tell me now.” He stated as calmly as he could. “Did you get it?!”

“We we’re set upon by Woad’s.” Arthur answered. “They are protecting her for some reason. Merlin’s people are guarding the trail you told us about.”

“No…” Tristan shook his head in disbelief. “He’s going to die.” His breathing grew out of control; short gasps. “He’ll die and it will be my fault.”

Arthur stepped in close to Tristan, willing his knight to look at him. “It’s not your fault.”

“I wasn’t paying attention when I should have.” Tristan babbled, his normal calm reserve gone in the face of the news that Arthur had failed. “If I had gone myself then I would have the cure.” He spat angrily at Arthur. There was a flash of hurt in his commander’s eyes. Tristan didn’t care. The man he loved was going to die.

“Tristan…” Lancelot began, seeing the enraged tracker turn on him. “We’ll try again at first light. Merlin can’t keep this up forever.” Without Arthur catching on, at least he hoped not, Lancelot gave Tristan a hint at his time for escape. Knowing Arthur the way that he did, he knew his friend would try again after the horses were fed and rested. Tristan would have a head start.

“Galahad doesn’t have forever. Three days.” Tristan snapped. “That’s all the time he has left.” He turned and walked away before he did something he knew he would regret for the rest of his life. These men, Arthur included, were his friends. At times they quarreled, they brawled, and they insulted each other, but they were friends none the less. He couldn’t stay when he knew he was close to hurting one of them because the guilt he felt was eating him up inside. Without paying attention to the passing of corridors, Tristan let his body walk back to his quarters where Galahad slumbered while his mind plotted escape. If they couldn’t get the cure to Galahad, then Tristan would take Galahad to the cure. It was the only way.

Memories

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND:
PRESENT

Hannibal sat behind the desk in his office planning out what he needed to have taken care of before he and Will could vanish from the US. His passport was up to date. The bills on the house all electronically paid for from a numbered account, every month like clockwork. Plane tickets would have to be arranged and paid for, as well as passage for the dogs Will wouldn't leave behind. Hannibal knew well the tug of affection Will held for those animals. In the past, when he had been Tristan, his other close companion had been an eagle that he'd trained himself. Looking way from his tablet, he set his sights on Will stretched out on the chaise lounge content to look out the window. Or maybe he was dozing again? Hannibal had been preoccupied with the preparations that he hadn't noticed if Will had fallen back to sleep. Hannibal smiled softly at the sight. Will needed the sleep to heal faster. At least they didn't have to worry with him being poisoned and his days being numbered. Not like last time.

Pushing away from the desk, Hannibal shucked his jacket, draping it across the back of his chair. He walked over to the lounge carefully to study Will sleeping. Images rushed through him, many times they were together, many times they fought and killed together, and all the times they looked at each other with love. Hannibal tried to ignore the memories for months now, since Will had been shot by Jack. He knew before Will that they weren't who they thought they were. Taking a chance, he reached out, and brushed the back of his fingers across Will's cheeks. "How could I have lived my life without you for so long?" Hannibal whispered. Leaning in, he kissed Will's lips. Lingering for a moment, Hannibal forced himself back. There would be time for much more after Will was healed, and after they were gone from the US. Instead he took Will's hand, taking his vitals to reassure him that Will was on the mend.

Will dreamed of a battle. He was on horseback galloping a horde of men painted blue. The enemy attacked Roman soldiers, a carriage. He and the others of his ilk bloodied the grass, claiming the lives of the enemies pitted against them. Being the mast of the spear and the bow, he had been deadly enough to protect his fellow brothers of the sword. They fought until the last man fell to their weapons, leaving them dripping in blood that proved their skill. He could feel the thrill of riding his horse into battle racing though his veins, spurring him into action. The thought of killing didn't matter. It was the riding he lived for. It was the promise of freedom that kept him living from day to day. The future he could have with Tristan made him be a better fighter. Coming out of the dream he saw Hannibal sitting with him. Automatically, a small smile crossed his lips. "I fell asleep again?"

"Yes," Hannibal confirmed, "But you need it if you're to regain your full strength." He tightened his grip on Will's hand. "Did you dream this time?" Last night as he had been at Will's home, Hannibal had slipped into a vivid dreamscape where they were in battle, where he was deadly, and where he was soaked in the blood of his enemies. His former life as

Tristan continued to unravel in his mind. Sadly, there were still gaps. He was hoping Will would be able to fill some in from Galahad's memories.

"I did." Will answered in a rush of breath. "I remember the Bishop's carriage being set upon by the Woads. We were enthusiastic as well killed, as we fought to obtain our freedom. I remember you licking the blood from your knuckles after the battled ended." Will chuckled. "What do you remember?" He asked sitting up, keeping his hand in Hannibal's.

"I remember you," Hannibal answered and leaned back in. "I remember the way you used to kiss me when you thought no one would see. I remember our scouting missions, hunting, and camping out under the wide open sky." He left it open for Will to close the distance. His former, soon to be renewed, lover did just that. He sat up, their lips touching.

Will spoke, keeping his lips against Hannibal's, "I remember that Roman you bloodied because he dared to lay hands upon me." He angled his head with the intention of deepening the kiss when Hannibal pulled back. Will was about to ask what was wrong, when he was silenced with a look. Hannibal looked back towards the door and glared. Will followed Hannibal's gaze to see a silhouette beyond the frosted glass. "I hope that's not who I think it is."

Hannibal stood up, strode back to his desk chair and retrieved his jacket. He slipped it on, buttoned it, and continued on to the door. Opening it, he saw the red headed menace known as Freddie Lounds. "What do you want Ms. Lounds?" Hannibal bit out. Courtesy be damned. He was in no mood for her to be here, to be badgering Will, and slinging accusations of his mental instability.

"A quote from you about Will Graham. He's everyone's favorite psychopath." Freddie said looking beyond the Doctor to see Graham in his office. "Do you have a minute?" She smiled unashamed of herself. Doctor Lecter backed up and allowed her to enter. Something told her that she should be running away, not walking right into the lion's den, but she wouldn't be where she was today if she listened to that little voice. She might not be hated, but she would still be nowhere. Though, if she continued poking at Will Graham the way she was known to do, she might end up his next victim.

Disobedience

HADRIAN'S WALL
942 AD

Tristan packed a loaf of bread, a few apples, some dried meat, more pre-made poultice bandages, and some wine skins of water into a satchel. While Galahad slept for as long as Tristan could let him, he retrieved daggers from his trunk to tuck them into the hidden sheaths in his boot. Across his chest he settled his sword, the hilt at his right shoulder. They would have to be traveling light and fast. Feeling he'd prepared as well as he could, he went to Galahad's side. He rested his left hand over Galahad's heart, leaning in to coax his lover awake. "Galahad…" his young partner remained asleep. "Galahad, wake up." This time Tristan gently shook him. "Galahad." His tone was sharper this time.

Galahad woke at Tristan's voice. "What?" He slurred opening his eyes, blinking back the sleep. When he was able to see clearly in the dark, he saw Tristan's face, the worry etched into a normally placid façade. "Something's happened." He said draping is arm over Tristan's strong shoulder to help him sit up. The pain had returned to his chest, a great weight stealing his breath. "Tell me what."

Tristan had a moment where he could lie, where he could try and keep Galahad from worrying, but that would be a betrayal of the man he loved. "Arthur returned. They were attacked by Woads." Tristan bowed his head, his brow touching Galahad's. The fever had returned. "They didn't make it." He added honoring his oath to always tell Galahad the truth.

"Then I'm going to die." Galahad stated in disbelief. Many times in battle, they could have died. This was the first time he had to have the weight of that death weighing upon him.

"No." Tristan snarled. "I won't allow it. You are not allowed to die." Gathering his control he said, "I can get us there, but I need you, your talent of predicting their movements." They were already in hell, it would be made worse if Galahad was to die on this island. That was something Tristan refused to even think about life without Galahad.

"You know how using my gift makes me feel," Galahad mumbled, but his life was on line. "But I'll do it." Tristan alone understood the toll it took on him. Some days he didn't know if he was awake or dreaming. The last time he'd gone deep into his gift, Tristan had been the only to pull him out of it.

"Then we have to go. Right now." Tristan took Galahad's hand and pulled him out of bed pulling him into his arms. "While you were sleeping, I changed your bandage and the poultice. As for your talent, I'll be there to pull you back from the edge."

Galahad wavered on his feet, his hand resting on Tristan's shoulder, and the tips of his fingers brushed the hilt of his sword. "Do I get a weapon?" He joked, coughing slightly. Tristan just glared at him. "Never mind."

Tristan knew Galahad was trying to take his mind off of the impending danger they were going into, the death Galahad was facing, and the disobedience he was committing against Arthur. That stung, but the thought of losing Galahad was a small price to pay for Tristan. Taking Galahad's arm, Tristan brought it across his shoulders and wrapped his right arm around Galahad's waist. "We'll get the horses and go from there."

Moving along the shadows, Galahad forced every fiber of his being to keep pace with Tristan. They had to watch and wait for the centurions to move. At this time of night, most of the people were in bed, all except those drunken few still howling and carrying on. Any sounds they made would be covered and they were close to the stables. They moved down the side street and finally there were in the stables. Tristan froze. Galahad looked up to see Lancelot.

"If you two are to leave, you might want to do it now through the main gate." Lancelot gently tugged the reigns bringing Tristan and Galahad's horse to them. "Dagonet, Bors, and Gawain are waiting." He informed them. If there was hope for Galahad, Tristan would get there and kill anyone who got in his way.

"You would defy Arthur?" Tristan asked staring the other man down. He didn't have the time to question Lancelot's motives Galahad was running out of time. Going to Galahad's horse, Tristan made sure he had his grip, and helped the younger man into the saddle.

Lancelot sighed, "I would spare him from what's to happen." He answered. "You'll have a half a day's head start." There was nothing more that he could do, "I made sure to slip something in Arthur's wine, just enough to ensure he will be out until midday."

"Thank you," Galahad said as Tristan swung up into the saddle of his horse. He forced his features it a mask of calm, the face of a brave knight to hide the fact he was truly afraid. His death was days away and he tried so hard to keep faith that he would survive.

Tristan nodded to Lancelot in gratitude before nudging his horse close to Galahad's. Their window for leaving was closing the longer they delayed. Without any more words spoken, they headed towards the main gate where the other knights waited to aide them in escape. Under the cover of night, Tristan and Galahad rode through the open main gate, and out into unseen danger.

Confrontation

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND:
PRESENT

Freddie Lounds stood with her back to the wall, facing Doctor Lecter, and getting the distinct feeling that one wrong move would result in her possible death. Something had changed in his eyes from the last time she'd ben face to face with him. "I figured this time I could come to you without any false pretenses. I'm trying honesty for a change." She remarked, sarcasm veiling her quivering nerves.

"I warned you before Ms. Lounds." Hannibal said keeping his gaze to hers. "Will, would you come here and take her bag." He trained his hearing on Will, listened to him carefully stand, and walk over. There was the subtle scent of fear rolling off of her. It nearly made Hannibal smirk in triumph, but gloating was vulgar to him. "I certainly hope you didn't record anything while you were standing outside my door." Then there it was, a spike. She had recorded something.

Will stood to Hannibal's left, his eyes on Freddie Lounds. "Still can't learn can you?" He asked taking the small bag from her hands. Pulling it open, Will found her cell phone, a two different recorders. "Well, you do come prepared, that's for sure." He pulled out the phone first, popped it open and removed the battery as well as the memory card. Then he pocketed both items before examining one of the recorders. It was a standard voice recorder. All Will had to do was hit delete and everything would be erased. The second one gave him pause. Tapping Hannibal on the shoulder, in a gesture they has used in days long gone when they'd been Tristan and Galahad. It was a signal to remain silent.

Freddie dared to take her eyes off of Doctor Lecter in favor of watching what Will was doing. The profiler knelt down in front of her, his hands going to her legs sliding up and under the skirt she had chosen to wear that day. Now she was realizing her mistake. Will's hand moved further up, stopping, tugging free the new piece of tech she'd acquired. "Thought it worth a try." She remarked leaning her head back against the wall. Her eyes went back to Hannibal Lecter. "I've been searched a lot these days." Freddie smirked when Will switched the wire off. Then, Freddie groaned when Will pulled the rest of the wire and the small mic from out of the front of her tight shirt.

"We can't imagine why that would be." Hannibal muttered. Then he motioned to the chair Will normally sat in, "Sit." He ordered, tired of being polite with her. She was becoming a nuisance the more time she was allowed to walk free on this earth. If he was pushed, then she might end up on the menu next. Turning from her momentarily, Hannibal looked a Will. There was a familiar look in his companion's eyes. It was the look he knew Galahad to wear when they spoke of coming battle's while serving under Arthur. It was the look of shame, of knowing that death was the answer.

Will walked away from them, over to the fire roaring in the hearth, he tossed Freddie's recorder, wire, phone battery, and memory card into the flames. "You really need to be taught a lesson in respecting privacy, especially the privacy of someone you've termed 'insane'." Will looked back at her putting her phone back together. Walking over to stand once by Hannibal, he dropped her dead phone in her lap. "We catch you here again, it's going to go badly, for you." Will threatened lightly knowing Hannibal would back him up.

"You wouldn't dare…" Freddie said in disbelief sinking into the chair she was cornered in by the two men in front of her. Though, with the way they were looking at her, she knew that if she kept running straight at them, at Will, then something unfortunate would happen to her. "What happens if I leave you alone?"

"What do you think?" Hannibal asked and then in unison, he and Will backed away from the red headed menace. "It would be good if you left now." She stood up, heading towards the door he'd found her at. It opened, she walked through, and the door closed. Hannibal heard her footsteps increase, carrying her away from them in barely contained fear. He couldn't help but to smirk.

Will left Hannibal's side, going to the window. He pulled aside the curtain to peer down at the street below. "She was sent by Jack, testing the waters of your patience." He said coming to the realization after seeing the wire attached to her. "I think he's trying to provoke you into killing someone." Will mused, "If you took care of Freddie, it would be doing Jack a favor as she's a massive headache. He's upping the ante." Will looked at Hannibal over his shoulder. Hannibal came to him, stood close behind him, and wrapped his arms around his waist. "He'll seek to divide us before closing the trap."

"What do you suggest?" Hannibal asked resting his cheek against the side of Will's head. Before, Galahad had been a tactician, his skill highly prized by Arthur when planning battles against Merlin and the native Briton's. "How will they bring this to a close?"

"Jack will want to take us separately." Will answered. "If he can't take us apart he'll box us in blocking all manner of escape." He leaned his head into Hannibal's. "We'll have to have an exit plan in place to ensure we get away. Whatever plans you've made, accelerate them." Will warned angling his head to look at Hannibal.

Second Chances

BRITAIN:
942 AD

Midday was upon Tristan and Galahad as they road through the open country of Britain. Tristan strained his senses, watching, waiting for the Woads to attack. He hoped those blue devils were tracking them. Tristan needed to kill someone in revenge for Galahad's imminent death. Riding full out was pushing Galahad past his limit of tolerance, hurrying the poison to his heart. Risking their lives, Tristan pulled on the reigns, pulling his horse to slower pace. They had to keep moving.

Galahad kept pace with Tristan's horse fighting to keep in his saddle. Leaning forward, he started coughing again, his chest exploding with pain. He dragged in breath after ragged breath, nearly choking."Tris…tan." He coughed harder. "We've got to stop…" Galahad pleaded, spitting blood from his mouth. With what little power he had left, he scanned the surrounding hills. Nothing leapt out at him. They weren't being tracked, at least not that he knew, and not that Tristan had told him.

Tristan pulled attention from the area around them, feeling they could spare a few moments rest. Reaching over to Galahad, Tristan took the reins of the horse. He then turned his attention back to the surrounding area. About some distance away, he saw a large tree on a hill. They would have cover and shade. "Galahad, we have to ride a little while longer." He bargained. "Just to that tree."

"I can barely breathe…" Galahad gasped, he felt ready to topple from his horse. He was already leaning heavily to the left, towards the sound of Tristan's voice. His eyes refused to remain open. He felt every moment of his life, every ragged gasp that could be his last. "Tristan…. please…"

"Just a little longer," Tristan spoke rapidly. "We're almost there. Almost." Galahad's coughing grew worse. "Just a little bit longer." He repeated over and over. Their horses sensed their distress, increasing the speed. Finally the shade of the trees covered them. Tristan jumped down from his horse, rushed to get Galahad down before he fell from the saddle. He dragged Galahad over, with Tristan collapsing to the ground, his back touching the trunk of the tree. "No. no, no…." Tristan held Galahad close barely feeling the life inside of his love. "You have to stay with me." He pressed his lips to the side of Galahad's brow. "Don't go…" All that could be heard from Galahad was small gasps of breath.

"Tristan…." Galahad felt barely here, barely able to form words with the breath he couldn't take in.

"I'm here," Tristan kissed the top of Galahad's head. "I'm right here with you."

"I'm fading…" Galahad whimpered.

“No you’re not,” Tristan interrupted. “You just need a moment to rest, and you’ll be ready to continue traveling.”

“Look at where we are…” Galahad shifted in Tristan’s arms as best as he could.

“We’re on a quiet hill, under a tree.” Tristan tried to keep his voice from shaking too badly. “Stay with me a little bit longer.” He didn’t know what he was going to do. “I can save you…” Tristan promised weakly.

“No you can’t, but I can.”

Tristan’s left hand pulled free one of the daggers hidden in his boot. “Who are you?” He snarled dangerously eyeing the woman he hadn’t sensed was around. She was in a mud splattered dark blue dress, her blonde hair pulled back from her face, and a leather satchel resting on her shoulder.

“You were on your way to my lake to see me, to ask for my help in saving your lover.” The Lady said coming closer not bothering with the dagger the angry young man before her.

“Why would you help?” Tristan asked.

“Because I have seen the path you two will take in this life and in the next. His death is not this day.” The Lady knelt down, tucking her dress under her knees, and dug through the potions and salves in her bag. She removed a vial, holding it out to the angry young knight. “Get him to drink this.” He took it from her leaving her hands free to remove the salve she would work into his wound.

Tristan watched her pulling up Galahad’s shirt to expose his bandage. She sliced the bandage off, eyeing the poultice he’d made. He couldn’t mind her now as he popped the wax seal on the vial. “Galahad, I need you to drink this for me.” He used his right hand to open his mouth. Tipping the eerie green liquid into Galahad’s mouth, Tristan leaned back ensuring the liquid slid down Galahad’s throat.

Galahad didn’t know what was happening. One minute his life was fading from him, Tristan’s voice alone kept him rooted to the land of the live, and then something foul tasting was going down his throat. Then at his side something heated his wound, sending living fire through his body. If he had enough air in his lungs then he would have screamed like he was being burned alive. All he could do was convulse.

Tristan tightened his hold on Galahad as his body shook violently. “What did you give him?!” He raged. A few seconds later Galahad settled in his arms. “Is he..?”

“He’ll live.” The Lady nodded.

“What do you want in return?” Tristan asked ready to sell his soul. She said nothing, asked for nothing. She only smiled and then faded from sight. Tristan couldn’t believe what he was seeing, what had just happened. None of that mattered for long because Galahad was alive.

Planning

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND:
PRESENT

Will closed his eyes, called forth a scene where Jack and the FBI were making plans to capture him and Hannibal. He felt the tension in the air, felt the agents ready their weapons, feeling the urge to pull the trigger and put them down for good. His back touched Hannibal's, wishing for a sword or a gun; whatever would help them survive this confrontation. Will watched Jack come forward, cuffs in his hand. The dutiful part of Will, the part that told him not to fight, wanted to show compliance, a sign of surrender, but that wasn't who he was. Not anymore. With a thought, he banished this scene, and opened his eyes. Hannibal was there, but it was Tristan Will saw reflected back at him. "Jack will want to corral us, to surround us with Agents. If we resist, they'll open fire without hesitation."

"Then we think of something else." Hannibal sighed taking a seat, and crossing his right leg over his left. "If we cut ties too soon?" He asked when Will sat across from him. "What would Jack do if we were to simply vanish?" There was nothing they could do until they had a plan in place to get the safely out of the country without Jack delaying them.

"No," Will shook his head. "If we pick up and leave in the middle of the night, he'll hunt us down." Echoing Hannibal, Will sighed deeply. "Jack will use us until he has enough to bury. He can't do without our intelligence, without my skill." He scrubbed his hand over his face and then leaned back. "I swear planning battles against Merlin was far easier."

"Yes," Hannibal agreed. "Merlin was at least predictable." Sliding to the edge of his seat, he asked, "What do we need to cover our escape?" If need be, Hannibal would go out in the dead of night and set the stage for an elaborate Chesapeake Ripper murder. Only if it helped them to escape while leading Jack Crawford and the FBI in another direction.

"I hate to say this," Will sat up, "But we would need another murder to even begin to lay the ground work for our escape, and that would only be one side of the plan." Hunching over, Will cradled his head in his hands covering his eyes. The use of his gift made his head hurt like it used to when he had to predict the outcome of battles for Arthur.

"Tell me what you need," Hannibal reached out placing his hand on Will's head.

"How about a new head?" Will joked looking up.

"That is a bit beyond my power, anything else?" Hannibal joked. He hated to know that there was great pain rattling around Will's head from the result of his unique gift.

"Oh," Will playfully rolled his eyes, "I thought you could do anything." He teased. Then he thought of what Hannibal could do for him. "Do you remember how you used to rub my temples? Could you?" He felt odd for asking, but his head was killing him at the moment.

“For you, anything,” Hannibal rose from his chair to walk behind Will. Gently he pressed the tips of his fingers to the base of Will’s skull and started to rub, slowly moving up as he did so. “How is that?”

Will moaned leaning back into Hannibal’s touch. “You haven’t forgotten.” Another deep moan escaped him when Hannibal applied the right amount of pressure to his temples.

“It was the one small measure of relief from your gift.” Hannibal answered moving back down Will’s scalp to the base of his skull. “I’m sorry to put you through this pain.”

“It’s ok…” Will mumbled falling deeper and deeper into the pleasure of Hannibal’s ministrations. Closing his eyes he let his mind wander. On one hand Jack stood, his weapon drawn. On the other, there was Alana looking lost and betrayed. In between them Will and Hannibal stood back to hack. Hannibal faced Alana while Will faced Jack. They weren’t dressed as they were known, they were once more wearing the faces of Galahad and Tristan. Glancing over Tristan’s shoulder, Galahad saw Alana with her arms wrapped around Tristan while he whispered toxic lies in her eyes. Galahad looked to Jack, ‘How do you know Alana can be trusted?’ He asked. Opening his eyes, Will started to laugh. “I’ve got it.”

Hannibal pulled back, a smile crossing his lips, lighting his eyes. “Tell me.” He said moving back to his seat. Though, he would have preferred to continue tending to Will’s pounding headache rather than seeing his paramour downing pills.

“Jack already suspects you, and by extension me as well. Alana makes it no secret she believes us toxic for one another. What if we were to turn Jack and Alana against each other? Have them suspecting the loyalty to the other taking the attention off of us.” Will said.

“A murder would be simpler, and less time consuming.” Hannibal joked halfheartedly.

“Yes, but there is the chance someone would be following us.” Will argued gently.

“Alright, we do it your way.” Hannibal acquiesced. “But you know I can set the elaborate stage to keep Jack and the FBI wondering for years to come.” He added with a bit of pride.

“I know, but I don’t kill for pleasure.” Will remarked shaking his head. He couldn’t look at Hannibal without seeing traces of Tristan bleeding through.

“Well, maybe you should try it someday. You might get a taste for it.” Hannibal replied remembering that day with vivid clarity. Reaching out he took Will’s hand in his, finger intertwining. “Freedom is within our grasp.” He said. “This time, it’s not the Bishop baring our path, but Jack Crawford and the FBI.”

Will looked down at their joined hands, “And that means we have to be smarter than ever.” He tightened his hold on Hannibal’s hand drawing strength from the touch of a man who not only had his heart in this life, but in their first.

Forgiveness

HADRIAN'S WALL:
942 AD

Tristan and Galahad approached the wall with the Roman's in the guard posts watching them. He almost expected them to keep the main gate closed, to wait for Arthur to see them, but the massive doors opened with creeks and groans allowing them to enter. Warily Tristan guided his horse and Galahad's through and to the main road that let them to the village. Halfway they were met by Lancelot and Gawain. No Arthur. This didn't bode well for him. When he faced Arthur, Tristan alone would shoulder the wrath of their commander. No words were exchanged as Lancelot and Gawain turned their horses around to lead Tristan and Galahad into the settlement.

Galahad leaned to the left, close to Tristan and asked, "What's happening?" Things that happened this morning were hazy. Every time he tried to recall the events of that morning, all that came to him was blackness.

"I don't know. Arthur may be waiting." Tristan replied silently not entirely sure of they would find once they entered the stables where their horse were kept and cared for. He could hope that Arthur would understand why he'd done the things he'd done. Then there was a part of him that knew the Roman in Arthur valued order and discipline.

"What do you think it means that Arthur isn't here?" Galahad asked looking at Gawain riding in front of him. Even if retribution didn't touch him, he knew that it would fall on Tristan, and that was something he couldn't handle. Tristan had only done what he did to save his life, it wouldn't be right of Arthur to punish them.

"It's hard to say." Tristan responded turning his attention to the stable doors. They parted with Arthur waiting in the center. He felt the tugging of guilt, the sting of disobedience. Going against his commander had offended his sense of loyalty, but not leaving to save Galahad would have been the greater offense to the universe. Jols stopped them, taking the reins from them. Tristan slid from the saddle, not hiding from what he'd done. "Arthur."

"You disobeyed me, Tristan." Arthur said with a heavy heart. Next to Lancelot, Tristan was fiercely loyal.

"I know." Tristan nodded, lowering his head. Arthur was right to be angry with him, even though he felt what he'd done was right no matter what anyone told him.

Arthur turned his attention to Galahad still on his mount, slumped over his head nearly touch the mane of his horse, despite that, his knight looked healthier. In the face of Tristan's success, Arthur couldn't keep his anger from falling away. With a sigh escaping him, he leaned into Tristan and said, "I understand why you did what you did, I forgive your actions, but never disobey me again."

Tristan looked Arthur in the eyes and nodded once. “It won’t happen again.” He promised and he meant it. Loyalty was ingrained in his very bones. “But I had to make this right.” Tristan added hoping Arthur understood the full weight of his words. “You would have done the same for Lancelot.”

“Yes,” Arthur agreed, “I would have.” He pulled back raising the volume of his voice, and said, “You should get him back to his room so he can rest. Then meet us in the training courtyard.”

Tristan waited for Arthur and the other’s to leave them in the stables before breathing a sigh of relief. He turned back to Galahad who was trying to get down from his horse. Going to his companion, Tristan gripped Galahad’s waist to give him more stability. Galahad’s feet touched the ground with his back pressing into Tristan’s. He held his love close for a few seconds just feeling the way Galahad breathed in and out without trouble. For as long as he could he would hold Galahad while he tried to believe they were alone in the world.

Galahad leaned his head back, ready to just fall to the ground under the exhaustion. “That could have been worse.” He breathed out reveling in the fact that he could breathe deeply without pain or the weight on his chest. Galahad would have preferred if Tristan hadn’t been forced to disobey Arthur, but he was glad that he did and that he was able to live another day. Behind him, Tristan said nothing, just held him closer. Turning with as much strength as he still had coursing through him, Galahad cupped Tristan’s face, “I love you.” He couldn’t remember a time when he’d said those words to him. They never had to, they were always understood, but this near death experience had made him desire to voice them just so Tristan knew.

“I love only you.” Tristan replied without hesitation. “I promise to always find you, to always save you.” He responded in a rush of words before drawing his lover close so their lips could touch, so Tristan could taste the spark of life that still resided inside of Galahad as a result of his actions today. Pulling back, Tristan rested their foreheads together. They stayed like that, frozen for an instant of time where everything around them grew so still. Tristan pushed aside the nagging words of the Lady of the Lake. She said she’d seen their path in the next life. Would they have one? Would they be together? To any gods that were listening, Tristan prayed they would indeed be together.

Rememberance

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND:
PRESENT

They had a plan in place. Hannibal was sure it would work, but then why didn't he shake this nagging feeling something was acting against them. Looking out through the window in his bedroom he gazed at the night barely able to call it night due to the street lights. If he closed his eyes, he could almost believe he was back in Britain, back on the wall gazing up at the large sky seeing all the stars in the heavens. He almost longed for those days, those simpler times when he hadn't a care in the word but to obey his Commander and kill their enemies. These days, things were more complicated, morality ruled in its twisted fashion dictating what was right and what was wrong.

From his place stretched out in Hannibal's bed Will watched the man whose side he chosen looking out the window. He knew what Hannibal thought, he was thinking the same thing. They wanted to go back to a life where everything was clear cut and defined; a life they knew how to live. "Do you miss it?" Will asked resting his right hand on his abdomen when Hannibal turned to him. He didn't answer, not right away. Will saw in his eyes that Hannibal was thinking, weighing the answers he could give. That only made him smile. For him there was no answer, no right answer anyway. Each life they'd lived came with its own share of dangers. Back then an arrow or a sword could kill. Today it was a bullet.

Hannibal left the window in favor of stretching out next to Will on the bed. "I miss the freedom of knowing who I was and who I could love." He answered as best as he could. "When we answered to different names, you and I had the ability to be together. No one questioned it." Leaning in, Hannibal tentatively placed his lips to Will's. He was still unsure as to how comfortable Will was despite having his memories back. Hannibal would go slow in this area. Then, he too posed the question, "Do you miss it?"

Will smiled into Hannibal's uncertain kiss. "I long to ride, chasing the horizon amidst and ocean of grass until the moon forces the sun from the heavens and all left to bathe to the world is the silvery light of the stars." Reaching up with his right hand, he gripped the front of his red sweater pulling Hannibal down against him. His hands planted on the bed on either side of Will's torso keeping their chest's apart. Will opened his eyes, pressing his head back into the pillow, "Never hesitate when you want to kiss me." He said cupping Hannibal's face. They had been careful in what memories they chose to give voice to, hat experiences that joked about. "I remember a time we would be bathed in blood and victory, times when you would look at me and I knew that every time you killed, you killed for me."

Hannibal chuckled, "I would murder the world for you." He said seeing the acceptance in Will's eyes. Not long ago such a statement would have been met with suspicion. It swelled Hannibal's heart to know that with these memories restored to them, that they could speak openly, honestly. Will pulled him down; Hannibal went willingly, falling into the cradle of his

paramours thighs. Below him Will gasped and Hannibal froze. His wound was still fresh, but Will made no move to let him pull away.

“Back then, the world was the Roman Empire.” Will said arching his back, ignoring the pain in his side so he could prove to Hannibal just how committed he was to renewing their bond. He kissed the underside of Hannibal’s chin, where the noose would have choked him. Above him Hannibal shuddered. Will knew he had to have his closed, face tilted towards the heavens lying just beyond the modern roof. Then Hannibal was pulling back, his chest heaving with the effort to control himself. “What?” Will asked.

Hannibal kept his hands planted on the mattress on either side of Will saying, “I used to know every inch of you.” Sitting back, he knelt on the bed, and this time he set his hands to the hem of Will’s shirt. Gently he slid the white fabric up, signaling Will to sit up so he could remove the fabric from his body. In the moonlight streaming through the open curtains Hannibal marveled at the naked torso he used to now intimately. “Now, I have to relearn everything.” Leaning into him, Hannibal rested his lips to Will’s left shoulder where a scar had used to reside. It had been one of his favorites to explore. He let his tongue explore gunshot wound, the tip feeling the scar tissue.

Will gasped, his hand coming to rest on Hannibal’s shoulders, the feeling of Hannibal’s tongue made him quiver on the inside bringing forth the passionate storm of memories from desired touch. Will moaned with every swirl of Hannibal’s talented tongue over the scar of his bullet wound. His hands came up, his right threading through Hannibal’s hair, and his left cupping the back of his past lover’s neck. This was what they needed, a chance to relearn, and a chance to reconcile the past with their present. Will sucked in a breath, sharper than he meant to, when Hannibal shifted his attention from the bullet wound, to the space above his heart that was dusted with hair, but the skin was smooth. Before, there had been a thin slice across his left pectoral muscle from one of Tristan’s blades. With Hannibal’s tongue tracing the invisible scar from start to end, Will almost felt as if it was being branded upon his flesh once more. His past was more alive in this moment, pressed beneath the body of a man he could help but love more than anything.

Hannibal lavished attention upon Will’s unmarred chest. The wound under his tongue was so new, and yet so familiar that he had to commit each soft patch of the scar to his memory. He sat back on his haunches to gaze down at the missing half of his heart. Then words spilled from between his lips, “I have missed this, missed the tender press of flesh upon flesh.” He took Will’s hand, placing his palm over his heart. “Before, with us trying to destroy the other, I…” Hannibal’s words were lost. Will pulled himself up and sealed their lips together. He found his breath stolen from his lungs. The kiss was ardent, full of promised passion yet to be shared between them, but it also held a warning of waning strength. Hannibal had to be careful not to exceed Will’s tolerance level. He kissed Will back down into the bed, fought to keep their lips together, but broke apart when the need for oxygen grew too great to ignore. Resting their foreheads together, Hannibal gasped in breath after breath. “Never leave my side again.” It was something he’d said many times before, but the words had never been voiced with these lips in this new world.

Will stroked Hannibal’s face, “I am forever walking the same path as you.” He said using words Galahad had used upon occasion. In this moment, together, under the veil of night they

could speak pretty words to each other, they could make promises, and they could pretend for a moment they were Galahad and Tristan once more. “I’ve missed being with you.” Trailing his hands down Hannibal’s arms, Will wrapped his hands around Hannibal’s wrists. His intent would have been to roll them so that he would be straddling Hannibal’s waist, but he was still weakened from the injury to his side. Instead, Hannibal pinned his hands above his head grinning wickedly at him. The simmering passion between them had returned on the heel of their emotional confessions. Will kept his hands where they were with Hannibal returning to his exploration. He bit his bottom lip as Hannibal placed a gentle kiss to the bandage painting a section of his ribs white.

Hannibal settled at Will’s right hip remembering that there had been a burn scar from the tip of a fire heated sword. They had been seventeen, showing off for their fellow knights, and so full of their skill. Looking up the line of Will’s body Hannibal whispered, “I remember this scar, the one Bors gifted to you.” He placed a light kiss to the smooth expanse of skin where he former wound would have been. Hannibal felt Will suck in a breath in response, that didn’t stop him from sliding his tongue all the way across the line of his lower abdomen, and all the way to Will’s left hip. Teasingly, Hannibal sank his teeth in. Will arched into him, a moan filling the silence of the bedroom. Then he placed kisses to Will’s chest moving back up the line of his body.

Will was more prepared this time. When Hannibal was looking in his eyes once more, this was his time to catch his deadly lover off guard. Quickly Will rolled them so Hannibal was the one beneath him. He took his lover’s hands and pinned them above his head as he had been pinned. “You’ve been too far removed from loving arms.” Will whispered finding more and more of his persona of Galahad slipping through. Galahad could run from gentle and sweet, to extremely hot tempered. There was no in between for him. Leaning down, Will kissed Hannibal, infusing much emotion into the kiss as he could. Passion and pain. Hunger and need. Happiness and sorrow. Tomorrow brought many uncertainties that had fear gripping Will even though he knew himself to be completely safe with Hannibal.

Hannibal sensed the tumult of emotions swirling inside his gentle Will. Ending the kiss, he smiled up at Will, reassuring him with his gaze that everything would work out for them. He refused to let it be anything else. This time, failure would not be the option. They had to escape and get out of the country. “Then make sure I never leave them.” He couldn’t say that enough. It was his way of begging not to be cast aside. This time, in this place, they had the chance to have the future that had been denied them in their previous life.

Will’s features softened at Hannibal’s words. He rolled to the right, lying on his left side to face Hannibal. There were no words he could use to convey his intent to make sure they were never separated, but then again, he didn’t need words with Hannibal. They had a way of communicating that didn’t require words. Reaching out, he pulled Hannibal close to him; pressing them chest to chest, hip to hip. After a few mismatched breaths in and out, their breathing synced. For a while all they did was watch each other, until as one they fell asleep.

MORNING:

Hannibal rolled over when the waking world pulled him from the bliss that had been the black oblivion of sleep. When he opened his eyes he found the space where Will had been vacant. Sitting up quickly he looked around to find his paramour standing by the window, a lazy smile gracing his lips. “This is a surprise.” He said gently calling attention to himself. Will turned, coming back to the bed. Hannibal watched as Will slid onto the bed, crawling seductively toward him. All he could do was smile. This reminded him of the morning they were to face the Saxons. His smile lost some of its luster.

Will felt the turn of emotion as he moved closer and closer. Looking at Hannibal he asked, “What’s the matter?” Some dark memory was playing out in his mind; Will could see it reflected in the honey amber of Hannibal’s eyes. “Tell me what’s wrong.” He tried again. Sill Hannibal would not all the words to tumble from his lips. Wills at back on his haunches, folding his hands in his lap, and he waited until Hannibal could find his voice.

Hannibal knew what it was costing him, this almost seductive morning, by keeping silent. He had to sort through the sudden rise of foreboding before he could speak. On the morning Arthur had granted their freedom Tristan and Galahad had spent all night in their quarters being together until sleep claimed. Then, much like this morning, Galahad had woken first, but with a sense of fear about hm. He’d wanted to know what caused such ill feelings inside of his lover. Galahad would not talk, not until he’d taken a breath, sat down, and looked Tristan in the eye. On that morning Galahad said that if they stayed to face the Saxons, Tristan would die. “It was a morning such like this that you told me I would die.”

Will recalled that day with vivid clarity. In dreams given to him by the gods, Galahad had dreamt of the coming battle, seen even maneuver Arthur would make, heard every clang of swords clashing together, and he had heard the final breath of his lover. “I knew I had to tell you.” He responded trying to keep his voice calm. Galahad had paced their room up and down until Tristan woke. He’d tried to come up with another way out for Tristan. Their only solution had been for them to leave. They never did. “I can still see your body lying there, your eyes cast up to the heavens.” Will lowered his head as old emotions threatened to choke him. Looking up, he knew there were the faint mist of tears in his eyes. “I was never the same after that day.” His chest constricted with the terrible weight of guilt that he never understood why he felt.

Hannibal reached out cupping Will’s face. “It will not be like that this time.” He promised not sure how he could do such a thing with any measure of certainty. And yet, he had, for Will’s sake. “This time we will claim the freedom that is ours by right.” Arthur’s words still rang in his head after all this time. “Believe it and I will ensure it.” He didn’t know why he was still making promises; something in him had to make Will believe him with everything he had.

“I believe you,” Will said taking Hannibal’s hand in his. “I won’t start doubting you now.” Closing the distance, he was about to take Hannibal’s lips in a light ‘good morning kiss’ when downstairs a phone rang. “Not happening….” Will groaned. Hannibal looked at him, a second later they were chuckling at the same time. “You should get that, unless it’s Jack then ignore it.” He joked.

“If I were to do that, then it would be conceived as rude.” Hannibal replied, able to smile freely with Will. Reluctantly he moved off the bed, intensely aware that Will was following

him. Though, what his young love would do was beyond Hannibal's knowledge. They walked down the stairs, Will taking his hand. Hannibal tightened his grasp as they walked into the kitchen where the closest cordless phone was charging. Reluctantly letting Will's hand go, he picked up the phone and saw the caller ID read Agent Crawford. His eyebrow arched. Hitting the green button he greeted, "Good morning Jack."

"Good morning, Doctor. I'm sorry to have to bother you this morning, but I need you and Will to come a crime scene, that is if Will is up to it."

Hannibal turned to gaze at Will who rolled his eyes. "I don't know if that would be a good idea." He said leading Will to mouth the question 'what?'. Hannibal just shook his head. That wouldn't deter Will. Hannibal felt the press of Will's chest to his back, and Will's body was on alert listening hard to what Jack was saying. Turning, Hannibal looked Will right in the eyes as he continued to speak. "Will has yet to fully recover from his injuries. I don't want to subject him to such a harsh environment so soon after him getting back on his feet."

"That's why I would like your input as well. You can watch Will at the same time."

"Then what choice do we have?" Hannibal sighed in feigned submission. Jack rattled off the address. "We'll join presently." He ended the call with a sigh. "So much for a lazy day."

"You? Lazy?" Will chuckled bringing his hands up to cup Hannibal's face. "That I would love to see one of these days."

"Unfortunately, that is not this day." Hannibal lamented, wishing this day could have been for him and Will alone.

WEST VIRGINIA:
CRIME SCENE

Will stood looking at the mutilated body of a trucker with parts dangling from the roof, frozen blood pools, and tattered scraps of flesh. He said they needed a murder, and he got what he wanted. Looking back over his shoulder, he looked at Hannibal, and then back to scene before him. Being careful where he stepped, Will didn't need to call on his unique ability. "This may look like an animal attack, but it wasn't. If a rabid animal was to do this, it would have dragged the body off. This was frenzied, it wasn't for food." Crouching down, Will examined the bite wound on the arm that had been viciously torn from the body. Now with the knowledge of his past life, he was able to memorize the wound and then look up, his mind projecting the image and allowing his mind to dissect the wound. "The bite wound it's too large for any animal around this part of West Virginia," Will said breathing in. It was then a violent coughing fit hit him. As
he breathed in, he inadvertently swallowed some saliva.

Hannibal moved to Will, unconcerned with how his actions were perceived by Jack. Hearing the wet cough from Will threw images into Hannibal's mind of the time Galahad had nearly

died. He reached Will just in time for his paramour to reach out to him, fisting his hands in the front of his jacket. “Try to breathe slowly,” he soothed careful to put his hands on Will’s shoulders, not cupping his young love’s face as he much desired to do. Will continued to cough. Quietly Hannibal chanted, “Don’t let it be poison.” Over and over. Then Will’s started to gasp. Taking Will’s chin in his hand, Hannibal tipped his head back to he could look into Will’s eyes. He saw no blood painting the corners of his mouth, for a moment he was relieved.

Will was finally able to breathe, sucking in gasp after gasp of air. Hurriedly he choked out, “I’m ok…” He set his gaze to Hannibal’s letting him know with his eyes that he really was ok while he added, “I just breathed in wrong.” Looking beyond his deadly defender, Will said to Jack, “This wasn’t an animal. It was a human that thinks it’s an animal.” His words spilled out rapidly with another small coughing fit following close to heel. This time, not caring who saw him, he rested his forehead on Hannibal’s shoulder.

Anger rising in him, Hannibal was careful to keep it from his voice, turning his tone to that of concern. “Jack, I should get him out of here. Will is still not returned to full strength.” Under the guise of rendering aide, Hannibal wrapped his arm around Will’s waist, pulling his left arm across his shoulders. Will followed his lead, leaning heavily on Hannibal.

“Alright.” Jack nodded reluctantly seeing the state Will was in. He should push, should force will to stay, but he well remembered what happened the last time he ignored the health of his profiler. “We’ll talk later. Feel better.” He said genuinely.

Will nodded, “I have a good Doctor.” Hannibal started to move away but Will added before they were out of earshot, “If you want me to look over pictures and other evidence, let me know.” Hannibal squeezed Will’s side, signaling that they should leave. Not wanting to argue, he silently obeyed. Once they were in the car, the engine turned over, and they were heading to the highway Will said, “You were suspiciously quiet looking at that carnage.”

“I didn’t want to say anything in front of Jack, but I know of someone who might fit the profile for this level of brute savagery.” Hannibal replied keeping his eyes on the snow plowed roads of West Virginia. He was a doctor, telling this to Will was a breach of confidentiality, and yet at the same time, he found the words falling from his mouth. “I treated a patient who believed himself to be a beast trapped in the body of a human.” He sighed kicking himself inside for saying even that much.

“Did you set him on this path to shed his human form?” Will asked with the freedom to voice such words. “Or did you work to cure him of such flights of fancy?” He shifted a little to his left to take pressure off of his right side. Seeing Hannibal’s clenched jaw, Will nodded. “Ok, I’ll stop asking questions until you can find a way around Doctor/Patient confidentiality.”

“It’s not that.” Hannibal replied. “Its trying to find the right way to tell you and honor my promise of never lying to you.” He flicked the turn signal to the right and took the exit he needed. “The patient I treated was young, fascinated by tooth and claw, but that obsession wasn’t the healthiest.” Hannibal recalled, edited, the first facts he’d gleaned from the young boy brought to him.

“Hey,” Will whispered placing his left hand on Hannibal’s thigh, feeling muscles tense in response to his touch. He almost withdrew his hand, then thought better of it leaving it where was. “You don’t have to tell me if it would lead to a breach of ethics.” He knew Hannibal had a sense of honor; the same sense of honor that Tristan had. Hannibal had bent the rule of ethics surrounding his role of Doctor once that he knew of. It had been when Hannibal had pointed him in the direction of Tobias Budge.

“I want to tell you, but….” Hannibal licked his lips. “It would be wrong to divulge the information that could help you. But if you were with me, then there would be no harm.” He found loop holes in just about anything if it suited him. “Do we really want shine a harsh light on this new..,” Hannibal started to ask.

“Killer?” Will used the word that was possibly sticking in Hannibal’s throat. “If we can use him as a smoke screen while you twist Alana and I work on Jack.” He sighed feeling his side. It almost felt as if he’d popped a stitch with his coughing fit. “This amateur, this was his first kill, and he’s nowhere near Chesapeake Ripper intelligent, but we can use him.”

“If we must,” Hannibal sighed, offering a small shake of his head to convey his uncertainty of the course they were no set upon. Using guile and seduction to turn Alana against Jack was one thing. Using this fledgling killer was another. The unknown person had not caused them harm in any way, yet to douse the flame of desire that had seized them in the morning.

“The thought sits ill with you?” Will asked, his brow furrowed in contemplation. “This killer threatens us with discovery.” Knowing that they had agreed upon a plan of deception, it sat unsteady in the pit of his stomach. “Perhaps flight would be the wiser course after all.” Turning his attention from the sight of Hannibal concentrating intently upon the road, he set his eyes towards the scene passing them by. White snow reflecting the brilliant sun. Will squinted against the harsh glare enjoying the scenery.

“Do you truly wish to vanish now?” Hannibal asked knowing that his plans were in place for their escape. All Will had to do was say the world and they would be gone without so much as a trace left behind. “Give sincere consent and we’ll leave under the cover darkness.”

“We’ll play this out for a few more days to see what I can learn from Jack,” Will sighed heavily. “Escape is sounding appealing at the moment.” He added so Hannibal would know that it was an option not so easily discounted. “We should stay upon the course we agreed on, for now at least.”

“Then I should take you to your farm house for Jack to find you later?” Hannibal asked knowing he really didn’t need an answer. Will breathed in, making no move to respond. They drove in silence.

Allegiance RATED M

Summary: Tristan vows to find Galahad in their next life. Hannibal has to live up to that promise.
Disclaimer: I own nothing of Hannibal or King Arthur
Rating: M
Pairing: Tristan/Galahad Hannibal/Will

MIRRORING THE PAST:

WOLF TRAP, VIRGINIA:

Will fumbled with the keys to the front door of his farm house while Hannibal stood so close behind him. The healing laceration to his side still caused him pain, but with the weight of Hannibal's unspoken desire helped it to fade, helped him to move beyond his uncertainties. There was so much left unsaid between them, so much that they needed to talk about before they could move forward. The one thing Will wanted more than anything was to sate this rising passion firing his blood. This time when he tried to slip the key into the lock, he managed it. The tumblers gave way, the locked clicked open, and the door swung open. Will's pack of strays were accustomed to him opening the door, testing them. Each and every one of them waited where they were for him to give a command.

Hannibal fought to keep his hands at his sides, fought not to push Will up against the door and pick up where they left off that morning. He wanted nothing more than to feel his love beneath him, gasping and moaning, demanding his kiss. Hannibal reached out to Will, placed his hand on the back of the younger man's head just as the door opened. Ever so slightly Will leaned back into his touch letting Hannibal see a shiver of simmering desire course through his body. This gave him leave to close the gap between them, to press his chest to Will's back, and gave him the freedom to wrap his arms around the man he held so dear to his heart. Lightly, Hannibal pressed a kiss to the back of Will's neck, and then whispered, "I'll return tonight." Then before he couldn't stop himself, he pulled back to return to his car.

Will breathed a sigh of relief that mingled with a sense of loss at Hannibal's departure. His relief came with the knowledge that he could now prepare for Jack, find a way to shift Jack's focus from him and onto suspecting Alana. Though, how he was to do that yet eluded him. Fortunately he now had this alone time to figure it out. More than likely he would spend his time thinking about what Hannibal would be doing alone with Alana. In their past life, Galahad never questioned the affections of his Sarmatian lover Tristan even though he sometimes publically kept company with women at the tavern. This present time was a different story. Hannibal had a taste for women, had a body made to please them. Would he be doing that with Alana today? Will dropped to the edge of the bed with those thoughts plaguing him.

Hannibal drove with the hour fading away without much notice. He thought of Will, thought of them tangled together in the sheets, their heads sharing the same pillow. All he wanted was to let the world fall away while they renewed the bonds of love to bind their hearts together for all eternity. Instead he was traveling back to his residence where Alana was going to be meeting him. He wasn't sure what would be happening between them. Parking his car, he got out breathing a sigh of relief that she wasn't on the front porch waiting for him. Before regaining his memories, he had taken Alana to his bed in an effort to take her from Will, to make sure that he had no one except him. Now, was he capable of taking her again? Hannibal would put that to the test even as the thought of it left a sour taste in his mouth since waking up to the truth of his former life.

AFTERNOON:

Will was stretched on his bed coming out of sleep when he heard knocking on his door. He didn't know when he'd fallen asleep, only that he had, and now someone was on his porch. The dogs remained silent, waiting for their cues from him. With a groan Will got up, his hand immediately going to his side in an instinctive reflex to protect his injury as he went to find out who had woken him. Opening the door, Will found Jack on the other side, "Hey Jack…" Will stepped back silently giving permission for Crawford to enter his home.

"Will," Jack nodded, "I hope I'm not disturbing you?" He asked taking one step forward and then through the door when the damaged profiler stepped back. There were so many things he could say, but none of them were voiced. He still felt a small amount of guilt over what happened with Will. It was because of him that Will had the break, that Will was exposed to Hannibal. This was a slippery slope they were on and it was only going to get worse.

"No, not at all." Will shrugged, gritting his teeth at the tug of his stitches. "I was just resting." He moved away from the door and over to the chair where he carefully lowered himself down. "Did you bring the crime scene photos?" He asked trying not to place his hand over his wound.

"Are you sure about this?" Jack inquired sitting down in the chair opposite to Will. "If you need more time…?"

"Nope," Will shook his head, "I'm good, just if I move the wrong way, the stitches tug." He said, this time he placed his hand over his side. "Have you spoken to Alana?" Will casually asked, at least he hoped he made it sound casual. There was this vague sense that she'd come to see him while he'd been fighting off a fever, reliving his memories, and trying to fight his way back to the waking world, back to Hannibal.

"Not since she told me you'd been hurt and under the medical care of Dr. Lector." Jack answered with his eyebrow arched. "Why do you ask?"

"No reason," Will shrugged. "I just thought she might have come to Hannibal's house when I was fighting off a fever. A lot of details are fuzzy." He chuckled opening the folder to look at

the pictures again to continue on with the casual display. There was a line that had to be heeded with Jack, a careful balance that couldn't be upset even as Will sought to question Jack's faith in Alana's allegiances. "I just have this vague memory playing out that she was there, that she was talking to Hannibal, but I don't think it was about me." Will mentioned.

"Then you don't remember I came to see you as well?" Jacked asked, concern ringing in his voice when he was trying hard not to let it show. Will had a pretty good memory, even when his attention was divided. He tended to see more than anyone realized.

"Like I said, it's all fuzzy." Will forced his voice to remain neutral, with just a hint of confused inflection. Most of what he remembered was Hannibal tending to him, memories of Britain back when Rome ruled. "Did the tech's figure out what the animal was?"

Jack nodded, following the change of subject seamlessly, "They said the bite matches that of a Cave Bear, but the animal is a vegetarian, and extinct. While the claw marks match the same extinct Dire Wolf."

"Hmmm," Will flipped through the glossy high resolution photos as he half listened to Jack while processing the information for his profile. "I still hold true to what I said this morning. This killer, he feels like he's an animal trapped in the body of a human. This is his way of evolving, becoming his true self." Turning to Jack, Will handed the photos back. "You may want to check with Dr. Lector to see if he knows anyone that would fit this profile."

"I can do that." Jack nodded. "How are you really? You seem far off in the distance." Will was still on his game, still seeing the patterns others missed, but there was something else that Jack could sense was happening to his young profiler.

"Memories, scattered flashes of a life before the Chesapeake Ripper." Will replied, a sigh escaping him. Fatigue was starting to plague him again. "If you can show yourself out, I need to get more rest."

"Will…." Jack shook his head abandoning what it was he was about to ask. "Get better," He muttered instead heading for the front door under the watchful eyes of the dogs, the strays, he'd surrounded himself with.

"Thanks, Jack." Will muttered as he shut the door, engaging the deadbolt. He was only half truthful, he was tired, but he didn't need to rest, or he wouldn't. There were things he needed to do before he and Hannibal left the country. He glanced at his cell phone, wanting to call Hannibal just to hear his voice. That would have to wait, at least until tonight.

HANNIBAL'S RESIDENCE:

Night had fallen leaving Hannibal alone, thankfully alone in the silence of his house wishing for the company of Will. Alana had come to dinner with him, but had made the excuse that she had work before departing a short while after their meal had been consumed. During the

meal he'd taken to plying Alana with carefully laid doubts in regards to Jack Crawford. He'd taken the precaution of using the right words that made him seem as if he was using hypotheticals, talking about another person, and yet at the same person he was making sure the words he used were in direct correlation in Alana's mind with Jack.

The dishes were cleaned, dried, and put away leaving Hannibal to head up stairs to change into clothes that, if he chose, he could sleep in. Idly he played some music and then he started to disrobe, stripping away the persona of Dr. Hannibal Lector the good therapist. He wasn't entirely settled, new memories, new urges rising inside of him. Hannibal had this urge to rabble rouse while throwing daggers at a carved target like they used to do most nights when they were encamped inside the bounds of Hadrian's Wall. There had to be something he could do, some mental barriers he could erect to keep his mind functional. He was getting lost in memories when he needed to be clear headed.

Hannibal retrieved a pair of black silk sleep pants, pulled them up his long legs before leaving his walk in closet. He flicked the lights off in his bedroom going to his bed to stretch out. Exhaustion was not his motivation for coming up to bed early. No, he wanted to talk to Will. Hannibal took the phone from the base charger and dialed the number he knew by heart. The line rang, rang, and rang before the call connected. "Will… are you there?"

"Yeah, I'm here."

Hannibal breathed a sigh of relief. He had said that he would return to the farm, but matters arose leaving him to send a text, politely apologizing that he would be staying in Baltimore. "I just needed to hear your voice." It was stupid, and it was so human of him. Whether as Hannibal or as Tristan, he'd been a man so severely in control of his emotions and his desires. Except when it came to Will Graham, Galahad. "I wish I could come to you…"

"I want that too."

There was a pause on the other end of the line. "Will?"

"Yeah, sorry, I was just thinking about that hill, the tree we sat under that day before everything went black."

Suddenly tears filled Hannibal's eyes. "Yes, I remember that day. That day I thought I lost you as I held you so tightly in my arms. If I had, I never would have returned to the wall." He responded, mindful to keep his voice calm while conveying the depth of his emotions.

"I only remember you, your touch, your voice… I would have been happy to slip away peacefully with you as the last thing I saw."

Hannibal could hear tears in Will's voice. "I would never let you go, not then, not now." He said. "We have so many years to make up for the ones that were stolen from us." It was important to make that promise. Will needed to know that nothing would stop him from giving them their future. Then he thought better of what he said lest this conversation was being recorded. Did he really care? No one could understand the memories they spoke of. If they kept to that, no real details, then they would be safe. "Do you remember that song Vanora would sing?"

“I remember…”

“Would you hum some of it?” Hannibal asked. There was a slight chuckle on the other end of the line, but Hannibal knew Will would do this. Galahad would hum for Tristan, to soothe the savage nature inside of him. “Please…”

“Land of bear and land of eagle. Land that gave us birth and blessing. Land that calls us ever homewards. We will go home across the mountains. We will go home. We will go home. We will go home across the mountains.”

Hannibal brought his left arm up, resting his hand under his head as he listened to Will. Hearing that song, hearing that melody took him back to the night Arthur told them that Rome, the Bishop, had issued them a final order to travel far above the wall to rescue a Roman family. Galahad had been enraged, Tristan resigned. Rome was not about to let them go, not them, not the skilled Sarmatian Knights they were. Will stopped his humming. “Will? What is it?”

“Nothing, I thought I heard something that’s all.”

Silence filled the line. “Will, talk to me, tell me what’s happening.” Hannibal urged hearing his love getting up and walking around his farm house. “Galahad…”

“There’s something out there watching me. Tristan…”

In the background Hannibal heard Will pull back the slide of his gun, chambering a round should he need it. That forced Hannibal up and out of his bed to return to his closet to get dressed. At this time of night, with a little luck, he could be there in 45 minutes. “Will, I’ll be there as soon as I can.” He didn’t want to do it, but he ended the call so he could finish dressing in a hurry. Hannibal, for the first time, felt real dread over what would happen as a result of events he set in motion.

WOLF TRAP
VIRGINIA:

Will let Hannibal end the call. He set the phone down heading towards the window while with his free hand he killed the lights inside to darken the single room he lived in. The skills he’d been taught as a boy living under the tutelage of Roman officers came back to him in a rush. The night wasn’t so dark anymore. He could make out figures moving in the black, all normal night time creatures you would find. Then he saw something that didn’t belong. Will sank down, crouching close to the window to continue his watch, but to make sure that he wasn’t visible anymore. He had to hold out, to keep still long enough for Hannibal to get here.

For the first time since waking to his real persona, Will wished for a sword, for a quiver and for a bow. He wanted to use the weapons he knew inside and out, knew how to use like they

were extensions of himself. Galahad wanted Tristan at his side. If he stayed where he was, keeping watchful eye on the unknown in the tree line, he hoped that he could wait this thing out. The snow was on the ground, the full moon out, making it easier to see with the snow reflecting the moonlight. Will was reminded of the nights in the mountain, protecting the Roman family, the people, from the Saxons. Snow was on the ground, the trees were quiet allowing them to hear the drums. He and Tristan, when Tristan wasn't scouting the way a head, were sleeping close together sharing body heat. A shiver ran through him in response to the memory.

Will felt his side, felt his wound throb against the position he was in. He knew that he couldn't move, lest he risk provoking whatever it was that was out there. It could very well be the killer from the crime scene he'd visited that morning. Killers, the serial kind, always wanted to insert themselves into the investigation somehow. Perhaps the killer had been there, seen him, and followed him home. But that didn't make sense to him. Hannibal had said he knew someone who fit the bill for the carnage they'd seen. Will just hoped he was wrong. Hannibal was at least an hour away, if he was lucky and road conditions were favorable. From behind the little table he removed one of the many hidden firearms he had scattered about his house. Will rested his head against the wall, letting his long dormant senses take hold of him.

In his car, driving as fast as he could without drawing attention to himself, he drove to Will's home. Events he'd set into motion before his true self had been returned to him, were now at this very moment threatening to take the life of someone he held dear. If this happened again, because of him, he would lose more than his lust for life. Hannibal pressed the gas pedal to the floor trying to keep his mind from jumping to conclusions. He forced himself to stop thinking about Will's current danger; a danger he set against him. What had he done? Hannibal moved people around him as if they were pieces on the chess board. Tristan, on the other hand, he wanted nothing more than to battle back the world from ever having the chance to harm Galahad. Before he remembered who he truly had been. Hannibal had felt some measure of protection over Will. Now that instinct was put to the test. He had to get there to try and prevent what was about to happen.

Will focused all his attention, let the memories of training, of honed skills surface to aide him in detecting this new threat. The subtle sound of snow being crunched under foot reached his ears. Whatever it was, was coming closer. In preparation, Will pulled the hammer back readying to fire if he had to. Galahad couldn't wait for Tristan. Will had to move without Hannibal's direction. He crept away from his place by the wall, taking up a place with move cover. Just as he wedged himself in a corner, glass shattered, and cold air rushed in. Will caught sight of the creature that barely cleared the ceiling. It was all bones and blackness. Training his sight on the hulking behemoth, Will slowed his breathing to take a shot. The creature turned, it was looking right at him, and Will took the shot. He knew the sound of flesh being parted, of a kill shot landing its mark, knew the feeling in the air when a body was dead before it fell to the ground.

Hannibal pulled up to Will's house just as he saw the flash of a gun. His heart actually stopped in his chest. All time seemed to stop and then start again. Hannibal ran up the steps, bursting through the front door just as the bone covered monstrosity fell to the floor; dead. "Will?"

“This was you.” Will said coming into view. It was the only thing that made sense now the deed was done. Hannibal had done this.

“Before I knew….” Hannibal took a step forward noticing that Will still had his hand on the trigger. “Galahad…. I didn’t….” Two conflicting personalities, memories; Hannibal was finding it hard to concentrate on one line of thought.

“Tristan… you… Hannibal did this.” Galahad seethed.

This time, Tristan moved through the room going to Galahad. “He meant to force your hand, he wanted you to kill. I know he set this all in motion before we woke to this life.” He was close enough to reach out his hand, to place it against Galahad’s heart. “You must believe me.”

“I always do.” Galahad replied setting the gun aside. He looked to the body on the floor and then said, “We have to get rid of it.” This time it was Will placing his hand atop Hannibal’s. “Jack can’t know.”

“Then we will get rid of it.” Hannibal agreed, his fingers digging in lightly into Will’s shirt. “We should dismember the body, bury the parts all over the field, and burn the rest.” He looked down at the body of Randall Tier feeling no remorse for the death.

“I don’t kill for pleasure.” Galahad said in a breathy whisper.

“Perhaps you should try it some time, you might get a taste for it.” Tristan replied, his tone hardened steel.

“No, after tomorrow this will all be a distant memory.” Galahad replied backing away from Tristan to go into the kitchen where he retried a heavy meat cleaver. They had a body to dismember.

A COUPLE HOURSE LATER:

Hannibal washed his hands in the sink. Behind him, Will leaned against the counter with his left hand placed protectively over the wound still yet to heal along his side. “I know this was difficult for you.” He said scrubbing his hands raw to destroy any evidence of what had happened. After they were finished cleaning up, bleach would be poured down the drains to further degrade any evidence and DNA. “Will, come wash your hands.” Hannibal turned, a towel in his hands drying away the water. “Will….”

“What?” Will asked looking up at Hannibal. His hands were covered in dirt and blood, he knew it needed to be washed away. Once, Galahad made the claim that he wasn’t a killer, and yet, Will proved those words wrong. Together, he and Hannibal had dismembered a body, destroyed museum quality bones, and buried the pieces in different plots all over the field and

in the woods. He moved to the sink, plunging his hands under the hot water; a sigh escaped him. The bloody dirt ran down his fingers to land in the sink, and then down the drain.

Hannibal stood behind Will, reaching around the slender frame of his lover to take the bristled brush to scrub Will's hands. They didn't speak. What could they say that they hadn't already? Hannibal would accelerate their plans to run away. Hannibal set the brush aside and took a few minutes to rinse Will's hands clean of the soap while at the same time pressing their bodies together.

Will leaned back, rubbing his temple against Hannibal's cheek. He wasn't feeling anything he should be feeling; guilt, shame, remorse. Instead, he felt liberated. "Is this what you meant?" Will wondered. "That if I tried it, I would get a taste for it." He hadn't known this was what Tristan meant back then. It took Hannibal to open his eyes, to fire his severely diluted Sarmatian blood.

"Yes," Hannibal whispered placing a kiss to Will's temple. He angled his head, claiming Will's lips pushing as much passion as he could to distract them from what had happened. Seconds later, the kiss ended, they were breathing heavy, and they were shedding their shirts. Hannibal reached for Will, fingers hooking into the belt loops of his lover's jeans to yank him forward.

Will breathed in and out roughly. Being kissed by Hannibal was intoxicating, feeling his domination, his primal passion fueled him, had him responding more than he had to anyone else. No words were needed. Will set his hands to Hannibal's hips sliding along flesh and fabric until his fingers were parting the button from the hole. Then he lowered the zipper. It gave off a silent hiss.

Hannibal growled low in his throat walking with Will back into the room where the large cot rested in the corner. The broken window had been boarded up, the heat turned up so the chill was gone. Hannibal stopped just short of the make shift bed whispering, "Only if you want this." He couldn't deny the desire racing through him, the anticipation of being buried inside Will to renew the bond they shared as Tristan and Galahad.

Will draped his arms over Hannibal's shoulders. "I want you, whether it be as Tristan or as Hannibal." He answered and then pulled back to stretch out on the bed after toeing off his boots. His body quivered from excitement, from the anticipation of Hannibal's body on top of his. Will pulled the button of his jeans, but hands stopped him from lowering the zipper. The bed moved, Hannibal straddled his thighs, and his fingers finished what he'd stopped Will from doing,

Hannibal gazed down at Will lying beneath him. The sight stirred so many emotions inside him, so many desires. "Turn over." He ordered kneeling beside Will. His companion readily obeyed. Memories surfaced, seeing scars where none existed. Leaning over, Hannibal pressed his lips to the center of Will's back as his hands worked the rough jeans down to expose supple flesh. For now he left the pants bunched under the cleft of Will's backside. On impulse, he sank his teeth into Will's skin, he wasn't prepared for the response.

Will arched his back into Hannibal's bite. It felt so good, so familiar. He in turn bit the pillow when he felt Hannibal's fingers digging into the flesh of his left butt cheek. It was all so new

to him, while shadows of past joining's reminded him of just how much his body craved the man next to him. He reached down to take his erection in his hand, stroking up and down. It was enough to make him, not enough to bring him to release. He cried out when Hannibal's tongue swirled in the small of his back.

Hannibal pulled back to continue tugging Will's pants off. A scent reached him, something he'd not smelled in years. The scent of unbridled, wild passion. It was the smell he associated with Galahad. Hannibal moved off the cot, taking Will's jeans from his body. Without being asked, the brunette turned over showing the front of his body to Hannibal's hungry gaze. He knelt on the bed, his right hand reaching out, his long fingers wrapping around Will's hard length. His thumb rubbed the head feeling a little fluid leak out. Hannibal squeezed, Will moaned again, moving his hips, thrusting into his hand.

Will's hips moved with each stroke of Hannibal's hand. His mind had shut down to everything but the man above him, to the sensations that ran through him. A moan echoed on the air around them, then a name feel from his lips. "Tristan…" Will stopped the movement of Hannibal's hand so he could sit up. "Stand up." He told his companion. Hannibal didn't argue, stood up, and Will moved to the edge putting his knees on either side of Hannibal's long legs as he pushed the pants down. Will leaned in, his lips pressing into the lean muscles below Hannibal's navel, and like his killing inclined paramour, Will sank his teeth in, pulling the flesh up as if he was attempting to take a bite out.

Hannibal let his head fall back, a primal growl rising up from inside of him. He brought his hands up to cup Will's face. His eyes looked down the line of his body to link with that of his past lover, Galahad, and his current conquest Will. They were both one in the same and they always would be. Hannibal stood between Will's knees watching as his man opened his mouth and took the head of his erection between his lips. All the breath in his body exited his lungs in a rush. The warmth of Will's mouth overwhelmed him.

Will relaxed his jaw, taking a little more of Hannibal in his mouth. The taste of flesh, the salty fluid seeping from the head, it had his mind dizzy from the teasing. He pulled back, almost letting the tip fall out of his mouth. The action had Hannibal groaning, his left hand slipping back to fist in his hair at the back of his head. This time it was Hannibal that guided Will's head back down. He brought his hands up, gripping his lovers hips as he went down as far as he could without gagging. The tip of his nose touched Hannibal's skin.

Hannibal felt his eyes roll back in his head. His entire body came to life because of Will, because of the past they shared. So many emotions ran through him he thought his heart would burst from it. The life he knew was colliding with the past he longed to return to. "Galahad…" He called out. This was the name he wanted forever on his lips. Another groan left him when his lover pulled back letting his hard twitching length fall from his mouth. "Let me love you."

Will stood up, his arms once more draping over Hannibal's shoulders, "Then love me Tristan. All that I am is yours." Lips claimed his, tongues intertwining. He was falling back to the bed with Hannibal atop him. There was no pain, only pleasure, and that's all there would ever be between them from now on.

Tested RATED M

Summary: Tristan vows to find Galahad in their next life. Hannibal has to live up to that promise.
Disclaimer: I own nothing of Hannibal or King Arthur
Rating: M
Pairing: Tristan/Galahad Hannibal/Will

MIRRORING THE PAST:

WOLF TRAP, VIRGINIA:

The sky outside the window was still black, but Will knew dawn wasn't far off. He could feel it in his very being. Beside him Hannibal slept soundly, then again he always did after they made love. Will had been the one who never slept, the excitement was better than caffeine to keep him awake. Extracting himself from his lovers grasp, Will left the bed to sit in one of his chairs to keep vigil over Hannibal. Galahad marveled at the sight of a clean shaven Tristan, his hair shorn short enough that strands fell over his eyes as he slept. He didn't know which style he preferred, the long hair with braids, or the short that could be easily tousled. The long years had not been able to change the way Tristan slept; on his back with one hand under his pillow ready to grab the knife he used to keep.

Hannibal was pulled out of sleep by coldness at his side. Opening his eyes, he found Will was gone. A moment of panic raced through him, forcing him to sit up with the sheet pooling his lap, but relief washed over him when he found his man sitting in the closest chair to the bed watching him. "What are you doing over there?" he asked returning to the horizontal position he'd been enjoying. Tristan ran his eyes up and Down Galahad's body as he sat in the chair. The sight made his mouth salivate, eager to devour his tasty lover once more.

"Watching you," Galahad answered. The best way to talk to Tristan had been right after sex, when his defenses were down. "We can't keep going like this." Will sighed, casting his gaze to the window where the sky just started to lighten up. The last thing he wanted to do was kill the mood of comfortable contentment that surrounded them. "If we're to move on together, from this moment, we can't keep going to war with each other. I know this was squaring things; even Steven. I sent that nurse to kill you, and this was you repaying that."

Hannibal sat up and moved until he was sitting at the end of the bed with his feet on the floor. "I know what you mean. Fighting a battle on two fronts has been exhausting. I want us to move on, to leave this country behind, but we can't do that if we keep distrusting each other." He agreed with what Will was saying. Hannibal knew they had to have this conversation. "You have to trust me, trust that I am not going to betray you just to see what happens."

“My trust, my loyalty will always be to you,” Galahad swore and then said, “You have urges, hungers that I will never have, but know this….” Will leveled his gaze with Hannibal, “If you ever feed me meat that you knowingly took from a human being, and I find out about it, I will make you regret it.” He had to make Hannibal understand just how serious he was, but he also wanted his paramour to see that he wasn’t running away. “I won’t stop you from sating those needs you have, or helping you should the need arise, just don’t feed them to me. I’m here, I’m with you, and I’m not leaving your side ever again.”

Hannibal stood, the sheet falling from his body, as he went to Will. Bracing his hands on the back of the chair on either side of Galahad’s head, Tristan said, “I will never give you cause to question the meals I serve you from now on.” Because his heart rested with the man in the chair, Hannibal would keep his word. “You ambushed me on purpose.” He lightly scolded taking the rest of the space in the chair next to Will. On instinct Will’s left leg draped over Hannibal’s right one, and Hannibal wrapped his arms around Will’s torso. Many mornings in Britain had found the two lovers sitting just like this to watch the dawn wash over the land.

“I know how to get you to easily agree to things without too much fighting. Sex always made you loosen up, made you more agreeable.” Will muttered looking at Hannibal. “This reminds me of the morning Arthur tried to free us, before the battle with the Saxons.” The weight on his chest increased as he remembered that day. “I never wanted to leave that room.” He confessed.

“I know, neither did I,” Hannibal responded kissing the bullet scar on Will’s left shoulder. That morning had been hard for them knowing what awaited their commander. It wasn’t enough that Arthur had an entire army of Woads, Merlin counted among them, to fight. Arthur should have had his knights, and he did. Tristan had been the first to be ready for battle. “I remember each Saxon I killed that day on Bardon Hill.”

“I only remember the one that killed you.” Galahad replied. “You never should have faced him, you never should…” The soul deep sorrow he’d walked around with from that day forward slammed into him. It choked him halting all words.

“I wanted to spare Arthur from facing him, believing I could best him on my own.” Tristan said kissing Galahad’s shoulder in silent apology. There was nothing he would change about that day. He would gladly give his life for Arthur again and again.

“But you killed me in the process.” Galahad whispered, his voice filled with tears he refused to shed. “After the battle, they were collecting the dead, and they came to you…” He shook his head, seeing it all over again. Galahad had removed his bloody armor, stretching out on the ground next to the love of his life looking into vacant eyes. “I wouldn’t let them touch you.” He confessed, one lone tear escaping the corner of his eye. “I couldn’t let them take you from me.”

Tristan felt the emotions that were plaguing Galahad bleed into him. His last thought that day was of finally being free as he slipped away watching his Eagle fly above the field. He went willingly knowing that he was leaving his love behind, but secure in the knowledge they would meet again. There had been nothing that could have been done for him. His wounds had been too severe to be healed. The only option was to let death take him knowing the

devastation left in the wake of his passing. Tristan kissed the back of Galahad's neck not saying anything.

"Gawain had to drag me away from you by the end of the day." Galahad continued. "I fought free of him by kicking, biting, scratching. I did anything to get back to you. I didn't care who saw me, who knew, I kissed you one last time before…." This time when he felt silent he let the tears flow. That had been the hardest day of his life, losing Tristan just as they were finally freed from Rome. They buried Tristan in their sad little cemetery next to Dagonet and then they burned Lancelot's body so his ashes would scatter to the wind.

"All that was denied to us, has been returned." Tristan said quietly. "We have the chance to live together, to live in freedom, and I intend to seize it." Most of the arrangements had been made, their flight, all that was left was to pack a bag and tend to the stray dogs that Will loved so much. "Our preparations are nearly complete."

"That's good." Will nodded setting aside the pain in his heart. "What about the…?" he knew Hannibal had said he would make arrangements for the dogs, but he wanted to be absolutely sure that they were cared for and brought with them.

"A friend of mine will be coming out here in a few hours to tag them with micro ID chips so they can travel, as well as give them travel papers to get them through customs." Hannibal answered happy to be moving away from the subject of his death and the pain it had caused. Will nodded, acknowledging what he was told. "Good, now, might we return to bed? I would like to have a few more hours in your arms before we are driven apart for the day." Tristan kissed the back of Galahad's neck once more needing more time with his love than he knew he would get today.

A smile turned Galahad's lips up. "You know I can deny you nothing." He pushed himself up from the chair and looked out the front window. The sky was turning lighter, soon it would be morning and they would need to be Will and Hannibal once more. Galahad took Tristan hands, pulling him from the chair and against him.

Tristan kissed Galahad before leaving him to resume his place on the bed to wait for his lover to curl in next to him. "Do you know what this reminds me of?" He asked, a devilish smile playing on his lips.

"No, tell me." Galahad slid on to the bed, lying beside Tristan. He molded his body to his side, draping his arm across Tristan's familiar abdomen. Idly Galahad ran his index finger up and down smooth flesh feeling the vast difference between the man Tristan had been, battle hardened and scarred, and Hannibal whose flesh belied none of the injuries he'd sustained in this life.

"Arthur had returned to Rome with his mentor." Tristan brought his right hand up, fingers lightly running through Galahad's mop of brown curly hair. "Our Roman overlords were off whoring, drinking, probably both. We were left to own devices." More than anything his desire had driven him to make plans so that he and Galahad were alone all day, all night, and the morning after that.

Galahad turned his face into Tristan's chest. He knew that day well. It was the first time Arthur had been away from the fort, the first time the Sarmatian knights had none a day's rest that hadn't proceeded a day of grueling training. "We spent all day in one of the watchtowers that the Roman's had stopped using. You had pillows and blankets stashed there, along with bottles of wine, and some dried meats." The memory of it made him smile. It was their first time knowing each other in the intimate sense.

"I had been trying for weeks to get you into bed." Tristan joked, angling his head to kiss the top of Galahad's. "I wanted you so badly my body ached from desire. When Arthur told us he would be away for months, I knew I had to take you the first moment I could." His body responded to the flood of emotions brought on by the memories of that day.

Galahad sat up, moved over Tristan while remaining on all fours. "And take me you did." In response his object of intense desire gripped the back of his thighs, hands sliding up to rest on his backside. "I can still feel you invading me, conquering me to the very core…." Tristan's fingers dug in, groping him, making him moan.

"I want to be inside you again." Tristan growled sitting up so Galahad was straddling his waist, his hands pressed flat upon his chest. "I want to see your face flushing from the passion I create inside you." His body heated with anticipation, his hands wandering up and down his lover's side while making sure to mind the healing wound "I want to make sure you know that you are mine, and mine alone."

Galahad made no reply, moving up a little while reaching back to take Tristan in his hand, rubbing the helmet head of his lover between his cheeks. Then, the first sting of penetration had him biting his bottom lip, but he didn't stop taking the hard length of Tristan inside him. Galahad tasted blood on his lip while his mind processed his flesh stretching to accommodate Tristan in the most delicious of ways.

Tristan kissed the underside of Galahad's stubble covered chin, the bristles pricking his lips. Galahad angled his head letting him kiss his blood covered lips. The copper taste overtook his palate, overwhelming him with taste and touch that burned Galahad into his senses again and again. Tristan took his lovers hips, guiding him in a subtle undulation that would bring them both pleasure.

Galahad needed no other guidance. His hips moved of their own accord, switching from the soft rhythm Tristan had started him on, a fast paced up and down motion. He was mindless with pleasure that it took him a few beats to realize that Tristan had his hand wrapped around his engorged member; stroking him in counterpoint. "I'm not going to last if you keep doing that." Galahad gasped out, his arms coming around Tristan's shoulders.

"Then let yourself go." Tristan replied, equally winded. Galahad ground down on him when he brought his hand up, his thumb ribbing over the head of his lover feeling more and more fluid seep out. Galahad moved faster, thus leaving Tristan to catch up with his hand. They were soon panting from exertion, heat flaming their cheeks. Tristan added a twist to his wrist to finish off his love.

Galahad arched his back as he took all of Tristan inside him again. He could feel the other man's release deep inside him as his member twitched, spurting his own juices all over

Tristan's tensed abdomen. Their release sapped what strength they had managed to recoup. Galahad felt himself falling to Tristan's side, his lover following him without protest. Their bodies were hot to the touch, skin sensitive to the light breathing heat from the space heater. He could barely process the rise and fall of his chest as Tristan slipped from inside. That small motion had another moan rumbling in his chest. All he wanted rom this day, he knew he wouldn't get it, was to stay in this bed, stay in Tristan's arms, and forget about everything else.

Tristan stayed as close to Galahad as he could manage after his soft flesh from the intimate grasp of Galahad's body. This was what had been missing from his life for so long. As Hannibal he'd had affair after affair that were meaningless. They scratched itches for him, nothing more. Not until finding Galahad, loving him body and soul, had his true needs been met. Tristan carried that thought over into sleep as he followed Galahad down into the dark to rest, to spend what blissful hours they could before reality chased them out into the world.

AFTERNOON:

The afternoon dragged on with Will packing up what he needed. There was some resolution in the act, the finality of it. He would be saying goodbye to this life, to this place as he prepared to leave with the one man in all the world he had waited for. Will looked at his suitcase, then around at his living space. Would they get out of this alive? Would Jack spring a trap cutting off their route of escape? When Will got out of the mental hospital he was so filled with anger over what Hannibal had done to the point he conspired with Jack to force his hand. And now that anger was gone. In its place was love and utter certainty of loyalty to each other. Will pulled the zipper on his bag, closing it, and setting it aside for the moment he would take it out the door and never come back.

Will closed his eyes for a moment, taking the time to breathe in the stillness of his tiny farm house when a pressure began to build. It was new, and yet, also familiar as he knew what was to come. His mind opened up, took him to future that could be one of many possible outcomes if preparations were not made to prevent it. Jack was coming for them, they knew that already, but they hadn't been sure when he would come. Not until now. Will opened his eyes, blinking rapidly, and was thankful that there was no severe headache riding the coat tails of his premonition. He grabbed his jacket before running out the door. He needed to see Hannibal.

An hour away in Baltimore, Hannibal sat at his desk in his office finalizing plans of escape. Travel was arranged, Will's dog's, which he'd come to care for as well, were taken care of. A residence was being prepared for them, anything they would need being purchased and left for them. All that was left to tend to was a matter that could solidify them or permanently divide them. Looking up, a smile curve his lips upon seeing Abigail walk into the room. She had just returned from the cottage where he had hidden her away. "Abigail…." Hannibal closed his tablet, got up from his desk, and went to her. "Your journey was uneventful I trust?" He asked offering his hand to her.

“It was fine,” Abigail answered looking around the office she had escaped to on many an occasion when she would climb the wall of the hospital she had been fostered in for months. “I want to ask you something.” She said dropping Hannibal’s hand so she could do and sit in one of the chairs that patients used when they came for therapy.

“I will answer any question you ask.” Hannibal replied taking up the seat opposite her.

“Will you tell me the truth?” Abigail asked.

“Yes,” Hannibal nodded.

“How will seeing me alive make him feel?” Abigail looked away from Hannibal towards the window. She had been scared, had only done what he’d told her to do. Would Will understand that?

“He will be angry,” Hannibal answered licking his lips. “Mainly at me for hiding you away from him, for making him believe that he’d murdered you.” He sighed. “We will be leaving this place Abigail, all of us together. When Will killed your father, when I saved your life, we took responsibility for you. How could I in good conscience leave you behind?”

“How will you tell him?” Abigail asked trying to figure out what it was about Hannibal that seemed so different today. The language of Hannibal’s demeanor was more relaxed, less guarded than when she had previously seen him. “Will he try to kill you?”

“No,” Hannibal answered quickly. He knew after the morning they had, murder was the farthest thing from Galahad’s mind. Tristan, however, wasn’t too sure about bodily harm befalling him as reprisal for this betrayal. One more blow in a war they swore to end just this morning while they had been curled together.

“But he might try to hurt you,” Abigail mused reading it on Hannibal’s face. “Then don’t be in the room. Let him see me first.” She said. Will would be shocked to see her, but then he would be overjoyed that she was alive.

“Abigail, Will has to be dealt this news in the right way. Seeing you will shock him….” Hannibal stood up. He wanted to pace, but instead he went to stand in front of the fireplace.

Outside, Will exited the taxi in front of Hannibal’s home in Baltimore. After he’d finished packing, fed the dogs, and written two notes; one for Jack and one for Alana. His gift had given him a possible outcome to their exodus; capture. Will could have called, told him this over the phone, but instead he was here. The pull of his love guided him up the stairs, his finger pressing the buzzer. A few minutes slipped by before the door opened, and there he was, the man he’d been unknowingly searching for. Will couldn’t help by smile upon laying eyes on Hannibal. “Hi.”

Hannibal had been surprised to see Will standing outside his door. He had needed time to make arrangements for Will to come here, to find Abigail, but now that is paramour was here, there was no other recourse but to bite the proverbial bullet so to speak. He was trying to be careful, to keep his face neutral, but Will still reacted to him. “You should come in.” Hannibal stepped out of the way to allow Will inside.

“I know that face,” Will muttered walking passed Hannibal. “You’re about to drop a bombshell on me, aren’t you?”

“How do you know?” Hannibal asked shutting the door, putting off looking at Will.

“I told you,” Will reached out to place his hand on Hannibal’s shoulder. “You make this face when you try hide something. You think you managed the neutrality, but…” He stopped talking, not wanting to give away the tell that allowed him to pull the truth from a lie, or an omission.

“You should go upstairs.” Hannibal said without turning around. “All will become clear, but know I did not want it to happen this way.”

Will nodded, not bothering to continue the back and forth with Hannibal. He went upstairs doing as he was told. With each step he took, there was this unease growing inside him, a sense of dread that would quickly turn to anger. Will opened the door at the top of the landing walking into Hannibal’s office where his jaw dropped open. Sitting in one of the deep set leather sitting chairs, his eyes set upon a very alive Abigail. “Oh, my god….”

Abigail stood up, her hands clasped in front of her, and her eyes were fixed on Will’s. Her heart was beating a million miles a minute. She knew what the potential fallout would be, Will would want to harm Hannibal. “I…” What could Abigail say? She took a few careful steps towards him, towards the man who simultaneously ended her life while giving her a new one.

In response to her movements, Will moved further into the room. He couldn’t believe he was seeing her. She was alive, breathing, standing in the middle of the room. Abigail was really here. “You were dead…” Will breathed out. “They said I killed you.” Footsteps sounded behind him, giving away Hannibal’s return to the room. Will watched Abigail’s gaze flicker to him briefly, before coming back to him.

“I was scared,” Abigail said careful to keep her voice light.

“I never wanted to scare you,” Will replied taking another step closer to her.

“It wasn’t just you.” Abigail clarified risking a glance to Hannibal. He had set all this in motion; her fake murder, framing Will, killing and eating people while no one knew it was him. Even now her life might be in danger.

Hannibal shut the door, pressing his back to the wood. He could see the language Will’s body was using; anger, relief, and an intense desire to do harm. Letting his hands rest at his sides, Hannibal was prepared to defend himself when needed.

Will angled his body, his right hand slipping into his pocket to retrieve the knife he had there. Flipping the blade up, his past allowed him to throw the unbalanced blade. Will twisted at the waist, his arm coming up, the blade flew across the room imbedding in the door right next to Hannibal’s head.

Hannibal turned his head, looking at the hilt of the blade, and then said, “You still can’t aim for the middle.”

“When were you going to tell me?” Will snarled, his language changing from English to their native Sarmatian tongue. He hadn’t even meant to switch. “Were we just going to leave her behind?”

“No,” Hannibal replied calmly. “I was going to surprise you. We were to be on the plane before you realized that she was there.” He took a chance stepping away from the door, long strides carried him to Will.

Will reacted, anger still riding him. He fisted his hand in the front of Hannibal’s suit, caught him off guard, and took him to the ground. For good measure, Will lifted Hannibal and then roughly slammed him into the wooden floor. “WHY?!”

Hannibal groaned, he reversed his position with Will’s, pinning his lover to the ground, he held his hands above his head and pushed his knee into Will’s wound to subdue him. “Listen to me,” he snarled. “I didn’t want you to find out like this.” Under him Will struggled, tried to buck him off, but he’d never been good at fighting this hold; not even when all they did was fight.

Will bit his bottom lip against the pain in his side. He struggled a few more times until he had no choice but to settle down and feel Hannibal on top of him. “Get off!” He tried to lift his arms, but Hannibal held him to the ground with ease.

“Will you settle down?” Hannibal asked. Will struggled again forcing to apply more pressure to keep his paramour down. There were other ways he could turn the tide of Will’s anger, but Abigail was in the room, and this was enough of a shock to her already. She was wary of him, and he wanted to put her at ease.

“Get of me and I’ll think about it.” Will growled, still speaking in the language of their fathers. He wasn’t sure when he would switch back to speaking English, he just knew he enjoyed the return to the familiar, even if there was anger involved. “Tristan, let me up.”

“Galahad,” Hannibal whispered, “If you strike me, I will retaliate.” His lover nodded, silently replying that he would not resort to physical harm. At least he hoped no right now. It wasn’t any fun sparring with a wounded man. Tristan, as well as Hannibal, had a sporting nature. When he and Galahad had sparred, it always fired his blood, made him more determined to win as well as teach his lover how to improvise. He waited a few more seconds just to be sure, and then he released his hold sitting up. Hannibal stood up, standing over Will, and then offered his hand.

Will looked up at the man who had come to mean so many things to him; semi-friend, life line, sanity, betrayal, and hatred. But now he was seeing with new eyes, a new frame of mind, and all he could feel was loyalty, companionship, intense desire, and the warm wash of love. As Will he could be angry. As Galahad he wanted to forgive. He reached his hand up and took the one offered to him. He stood tall in front of Hannibal, even with the burning in his side, and said. “I wish I could be angrier at you.”

“I know,” Hannibal replied bringing his hand up to Will’s injured side. The warm wet touch of blood painted the tips of his fingers. “I’ve drawn blood.”

“Yeah, I can feel it.” Will acknowledged. “You want me to go sit down?”

“If you don’t mind.” Hannibal backed away to retrieve a first aid kit he’d hidden away after the events with Tobias Budge.

Will nodded to Abigail that things were alright, and she finally came to his side. “We’ll be alright.” He said quietly, his words in English once more, making his way over the chair she had abandoned. Will lowered himself down with a sigh.

“I thought you were going to kill him there for few minutes.” Abigail muttered crouching down beside Will. A small part of her hoped that he thought the same thing. That was the part of her that was still scared of Hannibal, of the power he seemed to exert over others.

“I wouldn’t do that.” Will answered letting his head fall back, turning slightly to the side to see Hannibal coming back. “I couldn’t do that to him.”

“Why?” Abigail asked and moved away so Hannibal could take her place. She hadn’t missed the telltale scent of blood lingering in the air.

Will looked at Hannibal when he answered Abigail, “It’s complicated.” Without being asked, he lifted his shirt revealing bloody from the opening of his wound that Hannibal had caused when he was being subdued. Then to give the doctor ease of access, he lifted his right arm up and placed his hand behind his head. “It’s funny, my wound held up well to the exertions of this morning.”

“You were on your back last night, not much chance for strenuous activity.” Hannibal replied cleaning the wound with peroxide. Their language had switched again. It was a comfort to once again speak in the tongue of their fathers, of their people. “Even this morning you were in one position.” He teased.

“I shouldn’t have attacked you.” Will muttered.

“You were angry.” Hannibal excused. Back then Galahad had been quick to anger, but it died almost immediately.

“I’m always angry.” Will stated. “But now, none of that should fall on you.”

“Why not?” Hannibal asked setting aside the brown bottle so he could get gauze and tape to cover the section of Will’s wound that was bleeding freely. “Your anger wasn’t misplaced. I hid this from you.” Now Hannibal knew that he could hide nothing from Will, nor would he want to. Not when he knew there was more to them then what the world thought.

“You did that before we knew who were truly were.” Will responded wanting to believe that their new state of being brought them closer to complete trust, to their loyalty to each other and only each other. He had to believe that all the pain they’ve dealt each other would come

to an end. They would focus on evading Jack and the FBI long enough to make their escape. “Before this, before my tantrum, I was coming here to tell you something.”

“And what is that?” Hannibal asked side stepping the issue of their fight. Well, he wouldn’t call it a fight, not really. Disagreement would be the better word to use. For them, a true fight would consist of fists, busted lips, bruised jaws, and then bloody kisses would be the end of it.

“I had a premonition earlier.” Will answered. “They’re coming for us in a day, two on the outside.” He said this time, his tongue returning to English once more.

“What did you see?” Hannibal asked for clarity, lowering Will’s bloody shirt.

“Jack and Alana will come here to find us, to delay us, and once Jack knows there is no possible route for escape…”

“He’ll close the noose around our necks.”

Hannibal, in time with Will, looked at Abigail as she spoke. He stood up to go to her, to the daughter he and Will emotionally adopted that day in the hospital room. “We’re planning to the leave the country. Those plans include you as well Abigail, should you chose to leave with us.”

“You want me to?” Abigail asked looking at Hannibal and then to Will in the chair. She saw it, the answer in their eyes. They wanted her to be with them.

“There has always been a place for you, with us.” Hannibal clarified.

“Where are we going?” Abigail asked. She didn’t want to stay in this country any more than Hannibal and Will wanted to. Her heart longed to be somewhere no one knew her, knew what her father had done, where no one would see her as a monster.

Peace

Chapter Summary

Hannibal and Will make their escape to Europe with Abigail.

MIRRORING THE PAST:

WOLF TRAP, VIRGINIA:

Jack Crawford, the Guru to some, stepped into the little farm house that Will Graham called his home. There was silence, not even a dog to growl a warning at him. That alone was enough to have his senses tingling. Then, confirmation was his when he saw two notes, one addressed to him and the other to Alana, were propped up on the dresser staring him in the face. He went over to them, where he picked his up, turned it over, and pulled free the paper where he read the words I was wrong in a hurried black scrawl. “Wrong about what Will?” Jack muttered.

Alana, after receiving the all clear from the tactical unit walked into Will’s house. He was gone, just as Hannibal had vanished in the dark of night. She looked towards the bed seeing the rumpled sheets, trying not imagine what took place there. Something had been different about Hannibal that morning she had gone to him in an effort to locate Will. His demeanor had been off, but she hadn’t noticed until now. “Jack?” She asked coming closer to him. He said nothing, just handed her a note with her name on it. She opened it without a second thought.

Dear Alana,

You’re probably wondering what in the world is happening, wondering why I left you this letter. I don’t really know myself, I just felt I had to leave you something. There are so many thing I wanted to say to you, needed to say to you, but there was never the right time. And now there never will be. You have always been a person that deserved the truth, and yet that’s the first thing I must deny to you. There is nothing I could say, or write, that would ever make you understand.

Farewell

A Stray.

Alana had the impulse to crumple up the note out of anger, and out of frustration at the vague words scribbled on the white paper. She opened her hands, looking at the words again. Will wasn't coming back. He'd left the country with Hannibal. "He's not coming back, Jack."

"Will's note tell you that?" Jack tried not to snap at her.

"The dogs are gone." Alana lied.

"We can't just let them go." Jack grumbled. He pulled out his cell, sending a text for a crime scene team to come out and go over every inch of the room looking for anything he could use to hunt Will down. "They're not going to get away."

"With what Jack?" Alana asked. "What is it you think they did?"

Jack heaved a heavy sigh that he'd been carrying around for months, since before Will was released. "Will brought some concerns to me after Beverly died. They were the same ones he'd been making for months." He shook his head. "I don't know what is making me listen now." Jack looked to Alana. "Will was helping me gather evidence that Dr. Lectre is the Chesapeake Ripper."

"You're indulging this again, Jack?!" Alana exploded. It had been bad enough that, in his delusional state, Will had made the same accusations against Hannibal while the evidence against him had piled up. The death of Abigail had been the final straw as far as she was concerned.

"Yes, I am." Jack answered calmly, even though nothing about this situation was calm. Will was on the run with a dangerous man. Was he safe? Was he dead? What had made him drop everything and just leave in the middle of the night with a man he was convinced was a murderer? Jack looked towards the bed, nothing more than a double sized cot, to see the sheets rumpled, the pillows in disarray, and he didn't even want to posit a guess as to what had occurred there.

"Hannibal is not a killer." Alana stated vehemently. She had never gotten a bad vibe from him, and she knew that she never would. "He's not."

"I'm not so sure anymore Alana." Jack whispered to her. "All I know for sure is that we have to find them." With that said, he left the small farm house to go back out into the frigid air of winter.

SOMEWHERE OVER THE ATLANTIC:

Will took a couple of deep cleansing breaths as he sat next to Hannibal. They were half way through their journey and the hard knot of panic had finally started to ease inside him. Were they really free? How long could they stay like this? Will didn't know, and right now he didn't really care. He was with Hannibal and they had Abigail. His life hadn't felt this right in

a long time. Looking to his left, he smiled at Hannibal's profile as his paramour had his eyes fixed upon the book in his hands. This was the Hannibal he cared about, but this was also the Tristan that he loved. Will reached out, the tips of his fingers brushing a few errant strands of Hannibal's hair away from his face. Hannibal smiled at that.

Even though Hannibal was seemingly reading his book, he'd read the same paragraph five times. He was more than a little distracted by Will at his side, by the gentle touch of familiar fingers going through his hair. Then he caught Abigail's eyes; she was staring at them like she had never seen them before. "Abigail, is something wrong?" Hannibal asked, taking Will's hand so he could lace their fingers together.

"You two are acting weird." Abigail stated. She hadn't wanted to say anything to them yesterday after their scuffle that hadn't lasted five minutes. Which, in and of itself was weird. Will hardly argued with Hannibal over the fact that she wasn't dead. They had spoken some weird language that both seemed way too at home speaking instead of English. And now they were here, on a plane bound for Europe. Now, she had the time to comment on their strange behavior.

Will tried not to laugh at Abigail's outright statement. To him, how he was acting with Hannibal was normal because of their past, of their habits. But to her, he could see how all of this was making her head spin, making her question all she knew about them, about their standing together. "A lots happened." He said, but it wasn't really and explanation.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Abigail asked, her eyes fixed on Hannibal holding Will's hand.

"It's hard to explain." Will offered up.

"That doesn't mean you can't." Abigail argued staring him down, the man who had killed her father, and who had tried to protect her.

"We have simply reached a new state of being." Hannibal said gently stroking his thumb back and forth along the outside of Will's. It was a nervous gesture he had from before.

"No…" Abigail shook her head slowly. "This is something else. You're demeanor has changed. Not to mention that weird language you two magically knew how to speak yesterday." She said. Their body language was off. Hannibal was angled towards Will, just as Will was angled towards Hannibal. They had this edge of danger, which Hannibal always had, but now it was in Will too. Right now, they seemed relaxed, but Abigail could see they were both poised and ready to attack any threat that came their way. "What's really going on?"

Will looked to Hannibal, this time Tristan was staring at him. Day by day their previous persona's emerged, stronger and stronger to override who they were now. Soon they would return to truly being Galahad and Tristan with only memories to cloak them in this modern world. "Do you truly wish to know?" He asked, the slightest trace of an accent filling his words. Abigail wasn't just any girl, she was a young woman his heart had adopted, a child he had claimed as his own after his actions had taken her father from her.

“Abigail,” Hannibal called her attention to him and away from Will. She as more adept than he originally though she was or could be. “Once you step through this door, there is no going back.”

“I killed someone, you helped me hide the body.” Abigail reminded. “It’s safe to say, I can walk through any door and handle what happens from there.” She was getting a little annoyed now.

Will sighed, “To tell you what’s happening, we have to give you a little history lesson.”

“Ok,” Abigail crossed her arms trying not to be rude or difficult while not really understanding what Will was talking about. That didn’t mean she wouldn’t listen.

Will licked his lips, squeezed Tristan’s hand, and then sat forward. “There are things that happen when you least expect them. I was injured last week, and somehow I made it to Hannibal’s house while losing blood, but it was not his name that tumbled from my lips. I uttered the name of someone I loved so much; Tristan.” He turned from Abigail and looked towards his love. Even though Hannibal schooled his features into a placid mask of calm, he knew what was really going through the other man’s mind. Tristan was uncertain of imparting this information to Abigail, but he wouldn’t deter him from doing so.

Hannibal sat forward as well, this time he spoke as Will watched him. He wasn’t want to talk, not when he had called himself Tristan but he would do it now. “When first Will and I walked this earth we did so as Sarmatian Knight’s; the language you heard yesterday was the tongue of our fathers, our people. The man beside me, I knew as Galahad just as knew me as Tristan.” This was uncomfortable to say the least. Except it had to be done. “We lived under the command of a Roman named Artorius, Arthur, as most of the world remembers him now.” Hannibal noted that his voice was no longer smooth and cultured. He had returned to that gruff guttural tone he’d used when speaking to the Roman mongrels they served with.

Galahad took up the telling when Tristan fell silent. “Our forefathers were forced into a bargain with Rome after each side fought to a standstill of decimated forces. They sold their sons into service for fifteen years in the Roman Auxiliary. We were such sons, taken, trained under Roman rule to fight, to kill.” He paused recalling the trek from the home to Britain. Galahad had hated every moment of it. “We were stationed in Britain, a vile island take over by Rome. We were housed within the confines of Hadrian’s Wall. It was a 600 mile wall that separated the roman territory from the north where the Woads made their home.”

Abigail didn’t know when she had leaned forward, drawn in by the tale they were telling, but it had happened. “What are Woads?” She asked. For a little while she was going suspend reality, she was going to believe what they were telling her was in fact the truth.

“Woads were what the Roman’s called the northern Britons; the ones they couldn’t conquer with shear brute force.” Galahad answered. “We were there fighting, barely surviving, for fifteen years and then one day, on the day we were to have freedom, all of it was taken from us. A bishop from Rome, from their church,” Galahad spat in revulsion. “This arrogant man, came issuing a final order to us, through our commander to go to the north and ‘rescue’ a Roman family.” He couldn’t help but sneer. Even now it infuriated him that they had to preform one final task before freedom was theirs.

“What’re you telling me?” Abigail looked from Will to Hannibal. The truth of their words were evident in their eyes, in the way they spoke, but she couldn’t believe it. “How do you…?”

“We were there.” Tristan stated. “A woman, today most would know her as the Lady of the Lake, told us that our lives were not over, that we would meet again, and so we have.” He told her. “Abigail, from here on out, we won’t be the same, not in the way you knew us, and yet, in other ways, we will not have changed.”

“Are you still gonna kill people?” Abigail asked in lieu of anything better that sprang to mind.

“Abigail!” Will scolded.

“In defense of this family,” Hannibal chuckled. “I will take life.”

“Ok, so…” Abigail motioned with her hands. “You’re telling me that you were Knights, you served ‘Arthur’,” She made air quotations, “And you were reincarnated because some lady said you would be. Is that about right?”

“Simply put, yes.” Galahad chuckled this time. He knew this had to be too much for her to take in at once.

“You mean like ‘King Arthur’?” Abigail did more air quotes. Hand gestures only happened she was confused and trying to understand. “Did he have a round table?” She asked.

“He wasn’t a king.” Galahad smiled. “Arthur believed all men were equal, and treated them thusly. In the fortress hall where we gathered to celebrate, to dine, to plan there was a round table.” He answered. That seemed to be the popular, accurate detail that survived the centuries. “He would do anything for his Knights, for the people he defended, and for his faith. Arthur broke with Rome in those last days because they were going to abandon the wall and leave the land to the Woads and the Saxon invasion. When he gave his word, he followed through.” Galahad looked to Tristan as he continued to speak. “Arthur gave us our freedom, he wanted us to return home, but we didn’t, we could abandon him too.”

“Ok,” Abigail shook her head sitting back in her seat. “I can’t hear anymore right now.” This was too strange. Way too strange. She took out her iPod, put her ear buds in and blasted some music to aid the wheels spinning in her head as she sorted through all she knew of the King Arthur legend and what Will and Hannibal had told her. She needed the internet.

Tristan shook his head at the quick retreat of his adoptive daughter. When they landed a new identity for her, and their former identities would be waiting for them. In honor of their former commander, they had taken the last name Castus. It was also a precaution incase Jack Crawford and the FBI got curious enough to search for them. “Do you think she’ll want to know more?” He pondered out loud keeping his eyes on Abigail. Her eyes were closed, her head lightly bobbing up and down in time with whatever music she was listening to.

“Perhaps,” Galahad sat back, draping his right leg over his left. “She’s had a lot to deal with at the moment. I think we should tell her more in increments.” He glanced at his lover. “We

have time to tell her all we know, all we've experienced, and of the lives we led." A smile crossed his lips when Tristan took his hand, lifting it to place a kiss to his knuckles. "I'm glad I found you in this life." Galahad whispered.

"As am I." Tristan responded just as quietly.

EIGHT MONTHS LATER:

The day was warm, the sky was clear, and the sound of swords clashing echoed through the clearing. Galahad took his stance opposite Tristan with a sword in each had. They had spent every day getting their bodies, their reaction times back up to where they used to be when sword and shield were the weapons of war. Sweat drenched Galahad's face, bringing errant strands of hair into his eyes. Tristan was in the same state. Silently they agreed to put their training on hold for a little while so they might catch their breath, take some water, and rest.

"I thought this was training?" Abigail asked from under the shade of a tent. "You two look like you were trying to kill each other." Hannibal had blood running from his nose, along his left shoulder, and Will wasn't any better off. They both were battling like their lives depended on it.

Tristan smiled taking a seat next to Abigail. "This was how we were trained to fight, to kill. We had to be more brutal than our opponent." He looked up at Galahad seeing some blood soaking into his sweat stained muscle shirt. Then he took stock of his own aches and pains. Galahad had landed a blow to his temple where he felt the skin split, his lip was swollen from the day prior, and copper flooded his mouth when he took a swig of water. Tristan recapped the bottle, set it aside, and then brought his aching right hand up to scratch at the stubble along his jaw. Each day, more and more of who he used to be returned to his face. It was a welcome sight.

"When am I going to learn this stuff?" Abigail asked. Since coming to this villa outside the capitol of France, she had done nothing more than brush up on her archery skills. She'd been sidelined from anything further, subjected to watching her two guardians battle each other day in and day out. One conciliation in all this, Hannibal and Will were teaching her archery, but it wasn't enough. She wanted to learn as much as they could teach her.

Galahad dropped into the chair on the other side of Abigail as he answered her, "It took us years to hone our skills in battle. Our memories have taken root in us, but our muscles, our reflexes need to be retrained before we even think about how best to instruct you." He showed her the practice sword, the edges dulled so as not to inflict major injury while still managing to teach a painful lesson. "With the blade, you have to become one with it so it's not just a weapon. As you well know with mastering the bow." Their actual swords were inside, sheathed, sharpened, and just waiting for their masters to return fully to the world.

"You've been saying that for eight months." Abigail pointed out. "Though, seeing how you two go at it, it doesn't make me that eager to be opposite either of you." She chuckled. "I just

want to learn."

"And you will," Tristan promised. "We just have to be sure we're in control enough not to bring any harm to you while we begin your training. We're not Roman's. Our goal is not to brutalize." He looked up at the sky, an instinctive move from the past to search for the Eagle he'd taken as his own. The sky was clear, but time grew even closer for him to make his journey to the city. "Time to shower." Tristan stood, and stretched.

Galahad did as his paramour had done, he picked his body up from the chair, and went to his love. He brought his hand up to cup Tristan's right cheek, his thumb lightly testing the split he'd put there yesterday. "Are you going to be ok to cook all night?"

Tristan captured Galahad's thumb between his lips, lightly sinking his teeth into the pad before he answered, "Yes, I'll be fine." They had spent a few months living in the city while the villa was made ready for them. Tristan had gotten a job as sous chef in a new restaurant as a way of blending into the city that would be his new hunting grounds. Except, his desire to hunt had cooled down considerably. The urges were there, just not the need to quell them. "Come tonight, we'll have dinner on my break." He looked at Abigail as he said this.

"I've missed the city." Abigail smiled. She had made a few friends and longed to see them again. This city was still so new to her, and all she wanted to do was get lost in it. Turning her attention to Will, "Can we?"

"How can I refuse?" Galahad smiled. "We'll be there."

"Good." Tristan kissed his Galahad lovingly bringing his hands up to frame his face. He forced himself to take a step back. If he didn't then he would linger and be late. Tristan hated to be late.

"Wow," Abigail got up watching Hannibal leave. "He really loves you." She stated. Even though she was to call them by other names when they were in public, to her, they were still Will and Hannibal. They wouldn't be anyone else in her eyes. Sometimes, she even dared to think of them as her father's rather than just her guardians.

Galahad watched Tristan set off towards the main house, the sun shining down on his sweat soaked shoulders making him glisten like a god. "I really love him." He pointed out with a sigh. This was the life he'd longed for before he knew this was what he was missing. Eight months and not so much as a whisper of Jack and the FBI coming down on their heads. "Do you think you're really ready to learn how to use a sword?" Galahad asked holding the hilt of the one in his left hand out to her.

"Yes!" Abigail took the offered weapon, not entirely prepared for the weight of it in her hand. The tip dropped, extending her arm all the way. Defiantly she lifted it feeling the protest in her muscles. "How do you handle the weight?" She asked wrapping her other hand around the hilt.

"Practice." Galahad answered taking the weapon back from her. "When we feel you're ready, we'll find you a lighter sword to use, to build up your arm strength with. Until then, stick with the bow." He chuckled at the unfriendly look Abigail was giving him.

“Why, you just criticize me every time.” Abigail argued, sighing heavily. She knew the reason for it though, they wanted her to be better and she was grateful for that. They were teaching her what they knew. It was what Hannibal had begun to do before everything fell to pieces and they had to leave the states.

“You know how to hunt, how to slow your breathing, how to fire between the beats of your heart, how to fire at a moving target.” Galahad said. “But, you have to learn to be that moving target. It’s not easy.” He returned his weapons to the rack. There had been more than enough training for one day and more than anything he had to clean the cut above his eyes where Tristan had cracked him in the face.

“Yeah, but it’s not like any of these skills are of use today, not when people fire guns.” Abigail pointed out.

Galahad shook his head, “That’s not true. These skills are very much useful now as they were in my time.” Together they set off towards the villa while he continued to speak. “You have all the senses, you need to know when you’re being stalked, but what you don’t have is the ability to know what measure of force is needed in defense of your life. You gutted Nicholas Boyle out of fear. If you had been trained by us. Then you simply would have incapacitated him.”

“How do you know, if I had these skills, I still wouldn’t have killed him?” Abigail asked.

“Because it’s what your training would have dictated with every fiber of your being. It would have been pure driven instinct.” Galahad answered pulling the glass door open allowing her to enter the house before him.

“Do you prefer who you are now?” Abigail asked leaning on the counter in the kitchen.

Galahad stopped and looked at her. This had been the first time she had asked such a thing. It made him pause to consider his answer. “There are aspects of Will Graham that are still very present in my mind, in the way I act, but more or less, I’m Galahad. I’ve burned through the shell I was locked in to return to this life. I don’t prefer one over the other, but am grateful what it’s brought to me.”

“You mean me?” Abigail couldn’t completely refuse his answer as one she would give if asked. She preferred being here with him and Hannibal. Yes, she missed her mom, she missed her house, but all of that was some sort of stepping stone to bring her to this moment.

“Yes. I mean you, and I mean Tristan.” Galahad clarified. “Even before, Hannibal and I considered you ours; our responsibility, it gave us a sense of fatherly ties to you.” Back then, the only one of them to be elevated to the status of father had been Bors. He had taken up with Vanora, a bar wench that had taken a shine to him, and for whatever reason none of them could figure out, she kept letting him back in her bed. Secretly, Galahad had envied his loud mouth brother of the sword. Now, he got to know what it felt like.

“Hmmm….” Abigail sat on the tall bar stool. “I don’t really remember who I was before my dad slit my throat.” She mumbled looking at Will. It was odd to think that he, along with Hannibal, had become more fatherly towards her that she preferred their affections to the

memories of her father. “That moment is split in my mind.” She continued on. “I mean I still see him as the loving father who taught me to hunt, and then he’s the monster who killed my mom.”

“You may never be that person again.” Galahad pulled out fresh food from the fridge so he could start to put together lunch for the dogs. “The moment Hannibal spoke to your father, it was all over. We are both forever changed by what he did to us, and it brought us to this moment, to this life we have now. Eight months, and it’s been peaceful, dare I say it, we’ve all been happy.”

“But you’re still waiting for the FBI to come crashing down on our heads, to shatter this elaborate illusion.” Abigail heard it in his voice, she felt it in her bones, and she knew that Hannibal probably had an escape plan for them should that ever happen.

“I think we all are, to some point.” Galahad answered. He took in a deep breath, trying to breathe in the peace of the home he and Tristan were trying to make for Abigail so she felt safe. That’s all they really wanted; safety. And yet, there was that small niggling feeling at the back of his mind prickling at him, warning him that something was coming to shatter their new found life.

Brothers

Tristan stood outside, in the alley soaking in the cool night air while the cacophony of the kitchen bled through the crack in the door where his foot held it open. He had to take a few minutes to himself, trying to reign in his eager anticipation of seeing Galahad and Abigail. Half the night flew by without Tristan noticing much; there were too many dishes to make. One of the few parts of Hannibal he was happy that lingered was the ability to create fantastic dishes to delight the palate of the high end clientele that frequented Diogenes. Tristan chuckled at the name; a man who spent his life searching for an honest soul.

“Tristan,” Danielle poked her head out the side door, “your companion has come to see you.” She was always amazed by her coworker. He was tall, lean, and gorgeous; definitely easy on the eyes. He also had this edge of danger about him that kept her at bay. She sensed her life depended on that.

Tristan smiled, the split in his bottom lip broke open a fraction, and when he licked the cut he tasted blood. He abandoned the section of brick wall he’d been leaning against to step back inside. Immediately he was hit with a wall of scents. All served to stir his hunger. Then he noticed Danielle staring at him more than she had before. “Is there something you wish to ask?”

“Do you indulge in illegal fights every week before coming to work?” Danielle asked, returning to her station.

Automatically, Tristan rubbed at his bruised jaw, a small stab of pain nearly made him wince. “I train with my companion, as you call him, every day.” He and Galahad knew they couldn’t pull any punches with each other if they truly wished to return to who they used to be while making a fresh start in Europe.

“Train to kill each other?” Danielle arched her brow. When Tristan gave no reply, she shrugged her left shoulder, and turned back to her work.

Tristan left the kitchen, entering the dining area. Immediately his eyes caught Galahad’s across the room. For a few seconds he felt as if he was back in Britain, back in the great hall standing at his place at Arthur’s round table. Galahad still had the power to take his breath away; even battered and bruised. That man was the love of his first life, and now the love of his second. Tristan went to him, pulled by the metaphysical tether that bound them together.

Galahad stood up, mindful that Abigail was still sitting. He couldn’t help but be drawn to Tristan. His heart skipped a beat the closer his love came towards him. Now, it seemed so ridiculous that, as Will Graham, he’d fought against Hannibal so vehemently. None of that mattered now that they were awake, being who they were truly meant to be. They belonged together. And the moment Tristan took him in his arms, Galahad forgot about everything else. When Tristan kissed him, he forgot how to breathe.

Tristan, aware of his surroundings, broke the kiss immediately after initiating it. He needed to have the taste of Galahad dancing on his tongue. “The more we are apart, the more I miss

you," he whispered before allowing his paramour to be free of his hold.

Galahad bit his bottom lip in just the right way he knew made Tristan want to moan. He took his seat next to Abigail as she perused the menu. Resting his right arm on the table, his thumb fiddled with the wide bronze band on his right ring finger. If Tristan was not working, he would have the matching one adorning his finger. Bound by battle, blood, and love.

Across the moderately quiet restaurant, two men sat observing the trio sitting at a center table. They looked like a quaint little family, but the men knew better. The blonde man, who had first inhabited the world as Gawain, looked to his companion, "Should we really make our presence known?"

"Yes," Lancelot hissed not wanting to drawn attention to their table. "Arthur sent us to bring them back with us. They are our brothers." And their Commander knew they were in danger. Tristan and Galahad were the targets of an FBI/Interpol joint case.

Gawain didn't want to bring his little brother any undue harm after so many years of being alone. It killed him daily to be so far removed from his kin. "We should let them lie and return home."

"Sarmatia is their home as well," Lancelot argued. "It's where they belong."

"And the girl with them?" Gawain inquired.

Lancelot shook his head, "I don't know." For now, they were ordered to watch and wait. If the authorities came after them, then they would intervene.

At the table, Tristan straightened; a shiver slithering up his spine. It told him someone was watching them. If it wouldn't give the game away, then he would turn to try and determine who was watching them. As of now, it was only a sense. There was no danger accompanying it. Years of experience taught him the difference.

Galahad picked up on Tristan's sudden change in mood. His lover was alert, attuning his senses to the room when a moment ago he was perfectly at ease. "What's the matter?"

"We are being watched," Tristan answered, his voice light, and conversational. Abigail looked to him, but he reached out to pat her on the shoulder to reassure her. The weight of the stare wasn't enough to cause him alarm. Uneasiness started to gnaw at him. Soon Galahad and Abigail would leave, and he wouldn't be there to defend his lovers back should those who watch them attack.

"We're at a center table, and you did kiss me," Galahad pointed out, just as lightly as Tristan. "That was bound to draw some attention." He could remember the first time Tristan had kissed him. They had been young, barely at the Wall for a year. It was one of those moments that just happen, and then it kept happening. Neither of them ever looked back after that.

"This is different…" Tristan shook his head. "Almost familiar." All too soon, his break would be over, and he would be back in the kitchen. He had five more hours before he could return home, crawl into bed with Galahad, and sleep.

“Hey,” Galahad reached out, taking Tristan’s hand. “If there is no immediate threat, then stop worrying about it.” His paramour was always more adept at sensing threat’s, sorting them out, as easily as he took a breath. It always made him the most dangerous of Arthur’s knights.

Reluctantly, Tristan pushed himself up from the chair. He had to get back to the kitchen, but before he left, he went to stand next to his lover. With great affection, his threaded his fingers through the back of Galahad’s hair, pulling his head back so that he might lean over and kiss him.

Galahad had to be careful not to fall too deeply into the kiss. They were still in public, and Tristan had to get back to work soon. In dire need of oxygen, he pulled back, but reached his hand up to cup Tristan’s bruised cheek. “We’ll see you tonight,” he whispered.

“I will be counting the minutes,” Tristan replied, delivering another quick kiss, before departing.

3:00 AM:

Galahad found himself awake, pacing through the villa to kill time until Tristan came through the door; which should be any minute now. Ever since it had been mentioned, he couldn’t help but scan the darkness of the tree line looking for any hint they were being surveilled. So far, he saw nothing. Though, that didn’t mean that there wasn’t someone out there. This was still a strange land to him.

“Will!”

Galahad looked up the hall to find Abigail coming towards him. “What’s the matter?” he asked, meeting her halfway. In a fatherly gesture, he rested his hand on her shoulder.

“I think someone is watching the house,” Abigail hissed, obviously unnerved by the prospect. “Shouldn’t Hannibal be home by now?” As if on cue, headlights lit up the driveway, and the front of the villa. The warm glow had her relaxing a fraction.

Off the foyer, there was a small alcove, Galahad guided Abigail there, gently pushing her against the curved wall, “You wait here until we come inside.”

“But…” Abigail started to argue.

“Abigail, trust me, and wait here,” Galahad stressed her name. She crossed her arms, rolled her eyes, and stayed where she was. Then he was out the front door to greet his beloved.

Tristan parked the car, killed the engine, and got out. There was this edge of tension to Galahad, he could see it the closer his love came. He knew better than to ask what was wrong. Expanding his senses, he felt with his whole body, listening to what his training told him. Nothing told him they were in immediate danger, and for the interim, that would be good enough for him. Tristan opened his arms, waiting for Galahad to fall into them.

In the span of seconds, the space between Galahad and Tristan vanished, and he was being enveloped in the arms of the man he'd loved since he was a child. He buried his face in the crook of Tristan's neck, breathing deeply, filling his lungs with the scent of home. The last remnants of his mind that belonged to Will Graham secretly relished this moment, the dark part that desired the monster, Hannibal Lectre. That beast was the perversion of what Tristan had been.

Tristan cupped the back of Galahad's neck with his left hand while he wrapped his right arm across his lovers back to hold him close. But the tension that had been in his younger companion translated over to him through the metaphysical tether that linked their souls. There it was again, that familiar gaze. It forced Tristan from the arms of the one he loved so that he might scan the night for the intruders. Instinctually, they stood back to back.

"Is this how you prepare to greet your brothers?!"

Galahad's head shot up, his eyes zeroing in on the tree line to his right. That voice belonged to Gawain. He could never forget the voice of his brother. "Gawain?!" he called out in his native tongue.

"Is this your happy face?" Gawain asked as he stepped into the light.

"Depends on if you bring good news or ill tidings," Galahad replied, this time in English. He didn't dare step away from Tristan. He knew his lover would not have it.

"A little of both," Lancelot made himself visible, staring directly at Tristan.

Tristan had to know, "Arthur?"

"He's alive, and waiting for us," Gawain answered.

Galahad placed his hand in Tristan's, but kept his eyes on his brother, "We should go inside." He figured they had a lot to talk about. Standing outside was not the place to have that kind of discussion.

"No," Tristan shook his head, "we talk here." Even though they were all proud Sarmatian knights, brothers of war, he didn't want them anywhere near Abigail for as long as he could manage it. The three of them had just gotten settled in France, and she was still adjusting to who they really were. There were times she would look at him, expecting to see Hannibal staring at her through his eyes. Who he used to be still frightened her to the point she was wary of a return from the deadly cannibal.

"Tristan…" Galahad started to argue, but then he looked towards the front door of the villa, it was open, and he could barely make out the silhouette of Abigail. Now he understood. Tristan didn't want to alarm her yet, or scare her with another potential move. And there it was, the pang to return home. "We could go home."

"And what of Abigail?" Tristan asked, turning to Galahad. "Would you expect her to share our desire to return to our ancestral land that she has never seen?" Galahad was not the only

one who wished to turn to that ocean of grass. Tristan dreamed about it, dreamed of being on horseback chasing the horizon.

“Tristan,” Galahad’s voice sounded so pained. “I want to go home.” He stepped in close to his lover, his hands coming up to cup Tristan’s face. “Don’t you feel out of place here? Our knowledge remains, but who we were has burned away. Arthur is alive, our brothers are waiting for us. Should we not go somewhere we have the numbers and protection?” He took a pause, taking a breath before continuing. “Forget Gawain, forget Lancelot. We decide where we go from here. I will always be with you, whatever you want.” This had to be their choice, so they could present the option to Abigail as a united front. If she saw they believed this the right move, then she would be more content to follow.

“You have bad news to impart,” Tristan looked to Lancelot.

“There is a man from the FBI here, looking for the two of you,” Lancelot pulled out his phone, cueing up a surveillance photo he’d taken that day. “We believe his name is Jack Crawford.”

Galahad broke from Tristan, saying, “If Jack’s here, he might try to arrest us.”

“He has no cause,” Tristan stated with certainty. “As Will Graham is no longer who you are,” he leveled his gaze with Galahad, “Hannibal Lectre has been burned away completely, as well as his hungers. I’ve not killed anyone while we’ve been in residence in this country.”

“I know,” Galahad whispered, a smirk curving his lips. The first few weeks after they’d come to this country, he’d scoured every paper, online news article, even the tv news for telltale signs that Tristan had broken his word. Nothing.

“As touching as this moment is,” Lancelot grumbled, “could we continue this inside.” It was their training that had him wanting to be inside, protected by four walls, rather than standing out in the open.

“Of course,” Galahad dropped his hands from Tristan’s face. They turned to go to the front door when Abigail appeared.

“Who’s the girl?” Lancelot asked.

“Our adopted daughter,” Tristan answered, his eyes remaining on their young charge as she stood with her arms crossed.

“Who are they?” Abigail asked, attitude evident in her tone. She didn’t like strangers.

Galahad stepped away from his love so he could stand in front of the young woman he adopted. “We know them, and we trust them. Lancelot to the left, and my brother Gawain on the right.”

“Brother?” Abigail looked at Will, confusion evident on her face.

“From my first life,” Galahad reminded.

“Oh,” Abigail looked at Tristan. He nodded in confirmation. “What are they doing here?”

“They’ve come to take us home,” Tristan answered honestly, even though he wasn’t entirely sure that’s where he wanted to be. As long as Jack Crawford remained to hunt them down, home would not be safe. No matter how remote the location, or how well defended it was.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!